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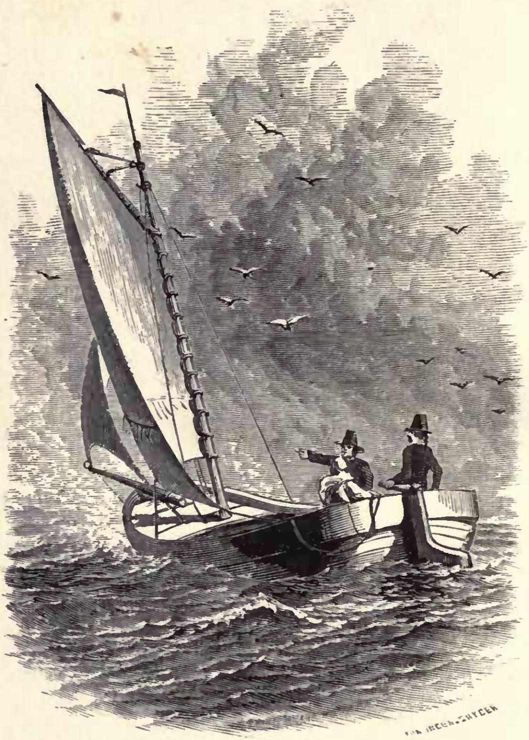

Master Hathorne's Family. Frontispiece.

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MASTER HATHORNE'S FAMILY:

A STORY OF THE EARLY BOSTON BAPTISTS

BY

GEORGE E. MERRILL.

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MASTER HATHORNE'S FAMILY.

CHAPTER I.

THE FAMILY CIRCLE.

THE dark November night had settled down stormily over the town of Boston, and the wind howled drearily enough through the deserted streets, whirling the snow-flakes hither and thither and heaping up many a drift beneath the fences and walls. Winter had set in with all the severity of bleak New England, and the colonists had been for the last month looking carefully to their dwellings and the shelters for their cattle, and laying in large stores of firewood.

The night was dreary out of doors, but the little family-room of Ezekiel Hathorne's dwelling was only made the more attractive by the tempest without and the beating of the sleet against the closed shutters. Even had the room been without occupants, the cosy, comfortable furniture, the blazing wood-fire, the tall candles burning upon the table, would have assured the stranger a retreat full of ease and security; but with the father of the family seated in his comfortable arm-chair by the hearth, with the mother busily engaged in knitting at the table, and with John and Ruth and Grace and little Willie seated around at different occupations and in the unstudied attitudes of home, it was such a picture of peace and comfort that one could have wished for nothing more.

The dwelling of Master Hathorne was not of the class usually found in the little towns of the colony. It was finished with some pretensions to the architectural style of the period, built of substantial material, and, as the house of a man of wealth, displayed traces of care and skill in construction, though utterly devoid of any attempt at exterior adornment. The timbers were covered with rough boards, to which the changes of the weather had given a dark brown color. The upper story of the house projected over the lower one in front, shading the door and windows of the ground floor, and the roof was deep and overhanging, allowing spaces at the ends of the house for windows above the second story. Surrounded by a large garden and orchard, and approached from the street by means of a winding path of some length, the dwelling had all the advantages of retirement in the midst of the town.

The interior of the house was of a much more finished and elegant appearance than the exterior. The large hall—extending from the front to the back of the house, with a door at each end, the one in front opening upon a little paved court-yard, and that at the rear upon an ample vegetable garden, from which the kitchen was supplied—was sprinkled with a neat covering of white beach-sand. At the foot of the broad staircase stood the tall clock that had been brought with the family from England, and two large oaken arm-chairs extended a hospitable invitation to rest to all who came beneath the roof. Doors upon each side of the hall opened into cheerful rooms, some of which had walls covered with hangings imported at considerable expense, and furnished in a manner becoming the dwelling of the wealthy and honored master.

Mr. Hathorne had left England on the occasion of some political trouble that rendered it expedient for him to seek the New World a little less than thirty years after the founding of Plymouth Colony, bringing with him a capital large enough to establish a prosperous business and to enable him to greatly increase his wealth. He was a man of note in the colony, having sufficient claims to gentility to be styled *master* by his fellow-townsmen, and of such uprightness of character and manifest piety as to be looked upon as a strong pillar of the church. Shrewd in business, always keeping an eye open for the main chance, scrupulously attentive to the requirements of the church, and maintaining in all cases a strict reserve toward his inferiors, while he was always affecting an affable, and at the same time a humble, demeanor toward those in high places, he had succeeded in gaining the respect, if not the love, of all who knew him; and had Master Ezekiel Hathorne's place become empty by any mishap, his loss would have been sorely felt by the community.

Hannah, his wife, was of a somewhat different nature. Hers was a disposition eminently designed to attract the love as well as the reverence of her companions. Mild and humble, living wholly in the fear of God, and displaying a true Christian benignity toward all men whether of high or low station, her influence over her household was unlimited. A noble example of a true, pure-souled Christian mother, she moulded the hearts of her children after her own, and endowed them with every good gift in the power of a mother to bestow. Her two youngest children had been born in America, while John and Ruth—the former a young man of twenty-eight years of age and the latter a girl of nineteen—had crossed the ocean with her, bringing with them, though so young, many refining remembrances of their happy home in England.

The family had been seated thus in their cosy sitting-room for about an hour after the evening meal, when the old house-servant, Prudence, entered with a folded paper in her hand. Ruth, the dark-haired, brown-eyed girl, arose, and taking it from her, handed it to her father. Prudence remarked that it had been left at the door while the family were at supper, and then withdrew to the kitchen. A shadow of displeasure crept over Mr. Hathorne's face as he cast his eye upon the contents of the note. Ruth noticed the change in his countenance, and with ill-concealed impatience waited for him to speak, for she had marked his quick, disturbed glance at herself and John as soon as he had learned the subject of the writing.

"Unpleasant news," he said as he slowly folded up the paper and nervously pressed the creases between his fingers. "Mr. Wilson warns me to keep strict regard over our young friend from Rhode Island. He fears he has brought among us the taint of heresy, and God forbid the church should suffer from any one sheltered beneath my roof. John, Ruth, you are more in his company than your mother or I. I shall depend upon you to watch carefully for this sin."

"Paul Wallingford!" said John, looking up quickly and laying aside the book he was reading; "there is no thought farther from his mind than the thought of heresy. As for the doctrines of the Quakers, to which his parents, as he has often told me, at one time inclined, he could—"

"It is not that which Mr. Wilson fears. Unhappily, Quakerism has no longer the vigorous enemies it once had. But there are other forms of dissent as deeply sinful and as carefully to be guarded against as that. Paul Wallingford, though not of Baptist parents, may yet espouse their doctrines himself, and I would object no more to harboring a Quaker beneath my roof than to receiving as our family friend one of these other heretics."

"I had not thought of the Baptists," John answered, passing his hand across his brow. "But I have no fears on that question. Paul is too sensible a young man to be led away by the absurdities and the deep sinfulness of their belief. It can never be."

"Then you have never heard him express any dangerous opinions?" asked the father, doubtingly.

"Never, sir, upon any occasion whatever."

"Nor you, Ruth?" and he fixed his searching glance upon his daughter's face.

"No, sir. We have spoken of the Baptists as of the Quakers and Antinomians, but only to call up their differences from the belief of the church. Paul cherishes no such opinions, I feel sure.

His daughter spoke with so much warmth and assurance that her father was satisfied and pursued his inquiries no farther, and for the time the subject was dropped.

The person of whom they spoke, Paul Wallingford, was a young man who had come to Boston from Providence for the purpose of completing his education by passing a year at Harvard College, having already mastered the course of study pursued by the lower classes of that institution at his home. He brought with him a letter of introduction to Master

Hathorne from Roger Williams, with whose family his own was intimate, and he had thus been a welcome and frequent visitor at the Hathorne mansion since his arrival, now a period of two months.

Wallingford was by nearly seven years the junior of John Hathorne, of fine and commanding appearance, possessed of a tall and well-shaped frame, of an ardent disposition, and a large, generous heart. His dark, wavy hair, brushed back from his forehead, revealed an extraordinary breadth of brow; his black, piercing eye was beautiful to his friends, but its glance was feared by those who had offended him; his naturally dark complexion was still darker from exposure to the rays of the New England sun, and his firm-set lips and unshrinking mien displayed the straightforward determination of his character. A strong friendship had sprung up between him and John in the beginning of their acquaintance, and no difference had ever occurred to mar its continuance. As far as the studies of the former would permit, they were constantly together, sharing each other's pleasures and aiding as far as possible in each other's labors.

Let it not seem strange that Mr. Hathorne, one of the strictest of the Puritans, should have received Paul Wallingford as his guest upon an introductory letter from that energetic opponent of the Puritan Church, Roger Williams! Previous to the departure of the latter from England, and long before his political and religious opinions had differed so widely from established principles, the two had been neighbors and close friends. During the residence of Williams in Salem he had been a neighbor of William Hathorne, a magistrate of the colony, and a near relation of his former friend, Ezekiel, in England. While in Salem he had repeatedly interchanged letters with his old friend through the aid of his own friends and those of Williams who made the voyage between the two countries. Ezekiel did not emigrate to New England till many years after Roger Williams' banishment, when not only his political opinions had changed, but also when his religious dogmas had declared him to be the bitter enemy of the Puritan faith. All communication had long since ceased between them, the breach of friendship growing wider with the lapse of years. But a few years after Hathorne's arrival, he had been obliged to leave his home and spend enough time in Providence to arrange some important business transactions.

The length of time he was obliged to pass away from home induced him to take with him on his journey his wife and daughter, an undertaking of no small difficulty in those days of dangerous wilderness travel. Upon their arrival in Providence, their old friend, with the noble-hearted generosity which he exercised even toward his persecutors, had hastened to greet them. By his kind words and kinder actions he had allayed all unpleasantness of feeling, and had actually forced Mr. Hathorne, anxious as he was for the welfare and comfort of his wife and daughter, to accept the hospitality of his roof; and here, for nearly ten months, the two families had lived together in perfect amity, differing only in the peculiar tenets held by Williams, and, for the time at least, passing over every approach to disaffection. The stern Puritan could not find it in his heart, even after his return to his home, to allow for a moment the hatred of the enemy of the church to destroy the remembrance of the kindness and benefactions of his friend.

Our little family circle was not long undisturbed in its quiet, for a quick knock at the door announced the arrival of him of whom they had just been speaking. John laid aside his book and hastened into the hall to aid his friend in laying off his thick outer cloak, while a cheerful bustle in the little room plainly showed that their visitor was no other than a welcome one.

Exchanging greetings with all in the formal Puritan manners, though so far departing from this as to stoop and kiss the little Willie, who stood by his knee, Paul Wallingford took the chair placed by the fire for him, and became at once a glad contributor to the joys of the evening.

It was a hard journey upon such a stormy evening from the college to Boston. The way must be traversed by a little-frequented road to the river-side, and there the dashing waves must be crossed in a small boat, blown hither and thither by the force of the tempest. The fact of Paul's presence among them upon such a night would have been enough to prove the young man's need of the enjoyments of a home.

"We had a hard time on the river to-night," he said. "I almost regretted at one time that I set out in such a storm, but then the recollection of the warm place here by your fireside for me and the cheerful faces to greet me strengthened my arm and gave me courage. I had to take an oar myself, for old James, the one who always rows me over, was so exhausted with pulling against the wind that he was glad enough to accept my offer of help."

"The offer would have been made had the water been as smooth as glass," said John, smiling. "You know you always help the old man when you cross; and as I am so well aware of your habit, you need not try to hide your kind deeds."

"We know you, sir!" cried little Grace, merrily; "when you say, 'This time the waves were so high,' we think every time, rough or smooth;" and the little girl shook her head in grave negation at Paul's modest way of speaking.

"But merely to take an oar, when—" ventured Paul.

"Merely to take an oar, when it would be easier to sit still and let an old man do all the work, is not to be covered up so easily," cried Grace again. "I wish I had so many good qualities that I could afford to hide any of them."

Thus spoke "little Grace," as her sister and John familiarly called her, a child of fourteen years, the light of the household, in whom Ruth often said to the others no fault was to be found. When the elder sister said this of their pet, the mother would smile gratefully, but the father shook his head doubtingly. Sometimes he would speak and say: "The heart is deceitful above all things."

So passed the evening pleasantly away till the hour for retirement came. Then Ruth took the family Bible from its table and laid it before her father. The domestics were summoned from the kitchen, and when all were assembled in respectful silence, the father of the family began the exercises of evening worship.

Mr. Hathorne had chosen for this evening a part of the fourth chapter of Ephesians. With particular emphasis he read: "There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. . . . And he gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; . . . that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive."

The prayer followed, and the solemn voice of the good man prayed that the Giver of all good things would send down upon them the blessing of peace; that they might be kept from the evil of the world; from the taint of the heresies that sought the destruction of God's church; from all the sleight and cunning craftiness of men.

Then a psalm was sung, the clear voice of Ruth leading the others in beautiful, soul-stirring melody. The "good-nights" were said, the light of the candles flickered along the dark walls of the hall, the uncarpeted stairs echoed to the tread of retiring footsteps, and darkness and silence brooded over the dwelling.

O ye blessed angels who watch over the abodes of men, must schism and discord mar the peace of this happy home, dividing the ties between parent and child, between husband and wife?

Ay! if the ofttimes bitter drop of truth, distilled from the alembic of the soul, be presented to the thirsting lips of the child of God. Ay! schism and discord, sorrow and even death, if for conscience' sake.

CHAPTER II.

RUTH HATHORNE.

BEAUTY is spiritual; the most perfect features are unmeaning until irradiated by the light of the soul."

Ruth Hathorne was a beautiful woman, because her whole being was flooded with this inner light, beaming forth in the perfect brightness of truth and holiness. Yet her beauty was not such as would readily attract the notice of a casual observer. Her dark eyes were shaded by long and heavy lashes; her cheeks were pale, needing the impulse of excitement to bring the rose flush to them; her small mouth, with lips bowed like the little archer's weapon, disclosed pearl-white teeth; but, withal, she was not what one would call handsome. It was to those who knew her that she was beautiful, supremely lovely. Her face needed study, as her soul invited careful reading. Then few blemishes could be found in either.

Her "little Grace," too, was beautiful, though her beauty was of a different cast from her own. Grace had her mother's complexion and features; Ruth resembled her father more closely. Light, almost golden, hair shed a beautiful radiance upon the younger sister's countenance; and light blue, dancing eyes and a perpetually smiling mouth gave her an appearance of vivacity and even sportiveness seldom seen in the children of the staid Puritans. Indeed the joyousness of her disposition was continually boiling over and eliciting rebuke from Mr. Hathorne for her unbecoming levity.

The two sisters, though very different in temperament, were ardently attached to each other, seeking in each other's society, in the quiet of their own home, almost all the pleasures they enjoyed. Ruth would often tell her sister of their old home in England; and Grace would listen for hours, as they worked together, to these beautiful tales of a land she had seen only in her sleeping and waking dreams—of the bright gardens and pleasant green lawns that stretched away in front of the houses in plains as smooth and soft as velvet; of the flowing rivers and picturesque hills and dales; of the forests, unlike the wild and dreadful woods of America, where fierce beasts and hostile Indians ranged beneath the deep shadows, but more open and free from tangled underbrush, and where, sometimes, the king would have great hunts after the timid deer and the wild boar; and then of the great cities, hundreds of times larger than their Boston, packed with houses and filled with bustle and confusion, where timid maidens like themselves could easily be lost in the maze of streets and throngs of people hurrying to and fro.

Grace was never tired of hearing of her sister's early home, and her blue eyes would become serious and open wide with wonder; her work would lie neglected in her lap; and all her attention be wrapped up in the scenes pictured out to her imagination by the glowing descriptions of Ruth. The fair narrator herself was as glad to talk of the old, familiar scenes as was her listener to attend, for with her old home only the pleasantest memories of childhood were connected, and it was only a delightful task to recall again and again the happy hours that had passed away for ever; for Ruth sometimes remembered with sadness that she was now a woman, or if not quite one in years, yet wholly mature in experience. The cares and labors that devolved upon the younger members of a New England household were by no means so light as to leave no trace upon the character; and those who had but a few months before been mere children suddenly became men and women, taking their full part in all the active concerns of life.

These emergencies of the daily life of New England had served to render Ruth not only more mature in character and experience than in years, but to make her already susceptible nature more keenly alive to the signification of every incident that occurred in the course of events both at home and abroad; of these she was a careful observer, and many a lesson of deep importance had been gleaned by her ever watchful mind.

It was about two years before the time of the opening of our story that Ruth had been deeply impressed by the circumstances that then transpired in connection with the Quakers. The dreadful proclamations of punishment by scourging, banishment, and death, sometimes made beneath the very windows of her home, had shocked her pure soul, and led her to think deeply of the interests for which this persecuted sect were striving and suffering. She knew little of their doctrines, but the very fact of their being ready to endure distress and all manner of disgrace in the championship of what they believed to be religious truth was an invincible argument with her in their favor.

A few months before the execution of Mary Dyer, Mr. Hathorne had one day taken his family to Roxbury to be present at a large gathering of Indians and colonists to hear the pious Eliot preach. After the services were concluded, Mr. Hathorne had to remain a while to complete some arrangements for a second meeting with the missionary, Eliot, and the church elders. John and Ruth in the mean time strayed away into the woods, searching for wild flowers with which to adorn their table at home. Unconsciously they wandered farther away than they at first intended, and their steps were only arrested by the sudden opening of the woods, where a little clearing presented itself. In this was an assemblage of people much fewer in number than those they had left, engaged in the same occupation that had held themselves during the afternoon. A few moments sufficed to show them that a body of Quakers were holding their meeting in the secluded spot, one of them at that moment speaking to them from a mossy stone that raised him a few feet from the ground.

John was for immediately returning to their party, but Ruth begged him so earnestly to remain, if but for a moment, to hear the words that fell from the lips of the preacher, that he reluctantly consented, and leaving the cover of the forest, they joined the listening band.

The speaker was a young man, singularly

earnest in his manner, engaging and holding the attention of every one of his audience. His sermon—for sermon it was—was near its completion, and he was now closing with solemn words concerning their dangers and duties, the mistakes of the past and the plans he warned them to follow that a better future might be ensured to them. After the first few words that fell upon her ear, Ruth listened with breathless attention, fearing to lose a syllable, a gesture, a breath. These were new ideas to her. It was a new doctrine, this belief that God had placed an inward light in the soul—a light whose illumination might some time be greater even than that of the Scripture. She knew not at first whether to fear or admire this dogma, but the earnest, eloquent words of the young speaker, infecting each one of his hearers with his own intense enthusiasm, led her to mistrust her own fears, and to hope that there could not be so deadly a poison in it, since one so wise and noble, so near the moral stature of a perfect man, as this zealous advocate seemed to be, could receive it as his rule of life.

She was glad, too, that he warned them of the consequences of the mistaken zeal that led them to such unseemly acts as those which had been their shame in the past. He conjured them to forsake this folly—the wearing of sackcloth, the sprinkling of ashes on the disheveled hair, the insults offered to the ministers of the church while in the discharge of their public duties. He reminded them with burning words that their thirst for martyrdom, if not unholy, was at least a curse to their cause; that it was not the sacrifice, torn and bleeding, which was most acceptable to God, but the gift of a broken and penitent heart worshiping in the secrecy of the closet, not seeking to display its piety to the public gaze; and that the manifest truth and sublimity of their great doctrine, the revealed light of the soul, should be thought sufficient to win the belief of strangers to their own form of religion, without the aid of virulent attacks upon all those of another faith and disgraceful suffering upon their own part.

Then a silence fell on all the assembly, and the rustling of the leaves, the babbling of the brook, and the sweet songs of the birds that fluttered over their heads, as if waiting to bear away to the highest heaven the words of the prayer that should follow, were the only sounds that broke the otherwise perfect stillness.

Then the calm, solemn voice that had ceased exhorting arose in reverent petition and thanksgiving to the most high God. There was not a soul of those that listened that was not in the presence of the Infinite. Slowly the tears began to flow from Ruth's uplifted eyes; with fervid earnestness her clasped hands quivered in her lap. She thought not who was leading up her soul to such a dazzling height; whether Puritan or Quaker, it did not trouble her; she was gazing on the face of God, she was clinging to the outstretched hand of Christ.

Even John trembled. The zealous young Puritan, the leader of the youth of the church, he to whom all the elder members looked as the chief spirit of those who should one day fill their places, trembled beneath the burning eloquence of the praying soul. His proud head remained sternly erect, but the half-scornful smile that had rested upon his face at the beginning of the prayer had faded entirely away, and when with the closing words silence again fell upon the assembly, a low murmured "Amen" came almost unbidden to his lips.

It was quite late in the afternoon when they turned away to retrace their steps to the party they had left. Their absence had created some uneasiness on the part of their friends, who had delayed their departure on their account, but the abundance of bright-hued flowers which burdened their hands was a sufficient excuse for their tardiness, and as John had given ready assent to Ruth's request, nothing further was said as to the manner in which they had spent their time.

The influence of this Quaker meeting had been great in leading Ruth to think upon their doctrines and the conflicting teachings of her own church. The more she reflected upon what she had heard that day, the more inclined was she to respect the spirit that prompted men to avow doctrines they knew would bring them into disrepute, yet which they could not reject without violation of the sacred law declared to them by conscience—"The voice of God revealed in the heart of man." What was this light that seemed breaking in upon her soul? She could not tell. She did not dare to admit to herself for a moment that the heresy of the Quakers was making the conquest of her heart, but she was conscious of a change in herself, of a calmer, nobler trust in God, in Christ, the Son of God and the Son of man, than she had ever known before. Yet there was one thing that troubled her: if it was the voice of God that spake in the hearts of the Quakers, if it was a divine light that illuminated their souls so brightly that its radiance was sufficient for their journey through life, why were they led to such extremes of fanaticism as those which their youthful adviser had warned them to avoid? Why were they not all like him to whose eloquent words her heart had throbbed in joyful response? As time went on, each day only brought new tidings of the violence and almost insufferable insolence of the most notorious of the sect, and as a natural result her modest soul shrunk appalled from such an excess of spiritual zeal, from such a turbulence of unrestrained feeling. Then came the crisis. Persons had suffered public punishment before—scourging, mutilation, banishment, death—but now an aged woman was to ascend the scaffold. Ruth herself had seen the trouble occasioned by this turbulent spirit at one time, when the services in church had been interrupted by the entrance of two women—Mary Dyer following them and encouraging them by her presence—who had desecrated the house of God, applying all manner of opprobrious language to the head of the Boston church, the aged and pious Wilson, and stopping the progress of the service. She had gazed with wonder upon the gray head that could so disgrace itself, so dishonor the religion of the true and living God, as to be a participant in such a scene, and she ceased to wonder at the severity of the judges who were called upon to punish these evil-doers. She was shocked that they should be made to suffer death; better submit to their mad folly and wait for time to eradicate the evil; but every feeling, every instinct of her nature forbade the slightest sympathy for their shameless excesses; and now that even the gray hairs of age were polluted with the mire of fanaticism, she began to distrust the faith of such spirits, that faith which she had almost begun to reverence and cherish in the days that had now for ever gone by.

Ruth awakened from her dream. "The inward light" she saw was not enough. The light of God's revealed word, the Holy Scriptures, was not to be shaded, and even put out, by the light of the soul. Both might be combined and throw united lustre upon the pathway of life, but alone, the light in the soul was insufficient, for it was too often shaded by error, too often counterfeited by false lights that would lead far astray.

Yet her experience had been of much use to her. She had seen good things lying beyond the pale of the church of which she was a member, and had been candid enough to confess that the good, wherever found, was not to be despised.

Ruth had never mentioned to any one the partial conflict that had been going on in her mind, excited by the heretical principles of the despised and persecuted Quakers. John, who had been present with her at the meeting in the wood, had more than suspected the influence of what they had there seen and heard upon his sister's susceptible nature, but since that day he had never spoken to her upon the subject, perhaps fearing that any words from him, by indicating to her that he too was pondering the question, would encourage her to pursue to the end the thoughts that were agitating her mind. It would have been vain for Ruth to expect sympathy from him, or indeed from any member of the family. She knew the bitterness with which Mr. Hathorne regarded those who held the proscribed doctrines, and that she could not have aimed a severer blow at her beloved father's happiness than to bring it to his knowledge that one of his children, and that one the elder daughter, whose love had occupied for many years the warmest place in his heart, had allowed herself to entertain any faith in those doctrines, thus making herself an enemy of the church and therefore his enemy. Even had she become thoroughly imbued with the principles which had forced themselves upon her consideration, she would have concealed with care from her father the knowledge of the change in her faith, for her filial love would have demanded any sacrifice of her by which she could shield her father from pain. It would have been with no less cost had she made her mother the confidante of her thoughts. Between few mothers and their children did there exist closer ties of affection than between Mrs. Hathorne and her daughters, yet there were insuperable difficulties in the way of perfect sympathy between them upon a subject like this. Among the women of the church Mrs. Hathorne was what her husband was among the men. Holding a position of high influence, and using this influence in every way for the advancement of the church and its members, she held a place in the hearts of a large portion of the people which few could ever hope to reach. The abundance of her temporal means gave her the power of contributing to the supply of the wants of the poorer class, many of whom were in actual need in the rigor of their New England home. By such persons she was regarded almost in the light of a patron saint, to whom they need only look and straightway their wants, both of a temporal and spiritual nature, would be satisfied; for the good woman never reached forth her hand to give without the attendance upon her bounty of many a good word of hope and cheer. Thus it will be seen her position in the church was of an important character, and of its doctrines she was as stout a defender among her own sex as was her husband in his own. Besides this, between husband and wife there existed the closest intimacy of thought and feeling. It would have been treason to the mind of the good wife, burdened with such a secret as this of her daughter's, to conceal it from her husband's knowledge. As Ruth rightly judged, it would have been worse than vain to have confided in her mother, for it would not only have given her the greatest pain, but in the end the sorrow would be fully shared in by her father. Moreover, Ruth had a brave heart. She was not afraid to encounter the difficulties of her situation alone, believing that the Omniscient would give her his aid to bring her to the right end at last.

We have seen how the conflict in her mind had been decided. For the time she had compromised. That there was truth outside of her own church she was aware, and that it was for that truth she thirsted she had not an instant's doubt. She had weighed the strange doctrine of the persecuted Quakers in the balance and had found it wanting; yet in it she had discovered, she thought, a part of that pure soul-truth whose absence she so sadly felt. Where should she find the glorious whole?

CHAPTER III.

PAUL WALLINGFORD'S VIEWS.

IT was a beautiful sight the next morning, when the little household awoke and gazed abroad on the outer world. All night the snow had fallen; all night the gusty wind had blown; and now the great drifts were piled against houses and fences, trees and bushes, in a rich confusion of swelling and glittering white. The tall trees were covered over with a shining bridal garment. Every branch and twig had its tender drapery fastened around it, glistening as if covered with myriads of diamonds that flashed in the rays of the newly-risen sun.

The fall of snow had been a very heavy one, and it lay in such depth in the streets that all passing was effectually prevented.

Against the doors and lower windows of the dwellings great banks were piled, and it would require the labor of lusty arms to break away the barriers and force communication with the streets and neighboring houses. But they had not yet had all of the storm. The rising sun had but unveiled his head to look for an hour upon the little town, when again the clouds closed up the rent, and the white flakes, as if not satisfied with the work they had already done, hurriedly chased each other earthward through the murky air. The sturdy colonists gave up the hope of outspeeding the elements in their labors, and sat down composedly within their homes, surrounded by their families, to enjoy as best they might the repose thus forced upon them.

Of course there was no such thing possible as Paul Wallingford's return to the college that day, and indeed, as it was Saturday and there was very little need of his doing so, the young man was not particularly sorry for the circumstances that laid this obligation upon him, and was disposed to look upon the storm as befriending him in the most signal manner.

John was only too glad to have the company of his friend during the long day in-doors, and found it very agreeable to pass the slow-going hours in the quiet occupations of reading and conversation. It was a novel thing for the young merchant—for John was in his father's business—to have a day for quiet pursuits at home, and he was glad enough to embrace this opportunity of pursuing his study of a work in which he had become deeply interested, the letter of Mr. John Cotton to Roger Williams and the latter's examination and answer, copies of which he had lately received from England. The two young men, therefore, passed the stormy day in the perusal of their books and in animated discussion of the topics thus presented to their minds.

It was a busy day for Ruth and her mother. It was Saturday, and the preparations for the morrow were all to be completed before the going down of the sun. All the morning, therefore, Ruth was busy in the kitchen and chambers, and only an hour or two before the close of the day found time to become one of the little circle in the front room of the house.

When she entered the room she found her brother and Paul engaged in the consideration of a question suggested by the reading of the former and bearing immediately on the painful events of the time. The subject was no new one, even to Ruth, for it had been discussed at length for years both in the Old and New Worlds. Many treatises had been written upon it, of which those that had last appeared—the works of Williams and Cotton upon what the former had styled "The Bloody Tenet"—had created no little stir upon both sides of the water.

Ruth drew her chair to the side of her father's before the fire, and while she applied herself to her work soon became interested in the conversation. Mr. Hathorne took no part in the discussion, seeming to be busily employed over some mercantile papers that lay in his lap and in a large bundle upon the floor by his side; but Ruth noticed that once or twice he moved uneasily in his chair and looked up quickly at the speaker, when Paul gave expression to some opinion of unusual boldness.

For Paul, as might be expected of a young man who had been reared in the respect for civil and religious toleration which obtained in the Providence Plantations, argued the right of man to think as he pleased, independently of magistrate or churchman; and as he spoke upon a subject of so much interest to himself his eye brightened, his cheek flushed, and forgetting the dictates of mere prudence, he hurried on with all the inconsiderate warmth of youth to the conviction of his opponent, none the less eager than he.

I shall not attempt to follow their argument through. Suffice it to say that it was a good close to their studies of the day. The young men were seated upon opposite sides of the fireplace, and its flickering light fell upon their earnest faces, bringing out each trace of youthful vigor and manly beauty in fair proportion. John's calm blue eyes seemed ever watchful for some new turn of his nimble adversary, and he spoke in measured tones, weighing each word carefully and duly estimating its value in the debate. Paul, on the contrary, was quick and impulsive. His eye, seeming to dart forth conviction from its black depths, was itself an enemy hard to encounter. His attacks were from a well-fortified position, and his defences so ably sustained that his opponent more than once began to grow uneasy for the success of his cause.

Ruth became intensely interested. Unconsciously, the young men were debating a point over which, led by her thoughts upon the sufferings of that sect whose doctrine had made such an impression on her mind, she had pondered in perplexity, but had at last arrived at a firmly-fixed conclusion. Would this conclusion stand the test of this debate? She waited the result with almost feverish anxiety. More than once did her lips part as if about to suggest some new thought in aid of her champion, but it would have ill become the modesty of the Puritan maiden to allow her voice to be heard in the strife between the young men. Ruth would have been startled had she heard the sound of her own voice pleading with Paul Wallingford, and even her own eagerness called up a faint flush to her cheek. She was not bold, she was not over desirous of partaking in pursuits unseemly in her sex, but her soul was stirred, and burned with a longing for truth that would be satisfied.

But Paul Wallingford needed no assistance. He was standing upon firm ground—ground that he knew perfectly well—so his confidence in his position was unshaken by any attack of his adversary. Gradually his warmth increased, and his enthusiasm began to bear him steadily onward to victory. He saw the end coming; his eyes already flashed triumphantly as he saw the spoils of the conqueror lying before him.

"Ah, John," he cried springing to his feet, throwing back the wavy hair from his broad, bold brow, "you have your antiquity to boast of, your experience in governments of centuries' duration; you have your great minds of the past—minds so great that they feared a fall from such a height, stumbling over this little block of offence; you can name with pride the labors of your Cottons; but I thank God, none of these are my defence! I have no higher argument than this: I point you only to that grand, sublime man, Roger Williams; I bid you look at his disinterested labors, his dreadful sufferings both of the body and spirit, his utter fearlessness in his championship of the right; and, last of all, I charge you to regard his glorious success. Who shall dare to say that the hitherto despised Providence Plantations have not more than held their own among the colonies of America? You say you send to us the flagitious spirits you cannot brook within your own bounds. You say our Providence is your great prison, your place of punishment for your malefactors. Send them to us. We thank you for them. Your malefactors are those who cannot stand upon your soil and call themselves free men; they feel the yoke of your narrow prejudices and the binding weariness of your conscience fetters, and when they dare to raise the voice in expostulation, when they would ease the chafing of their bonds by declaring their manhood and their manhood's faith, you scourge them, malefactors indeed, and cast them out to us. Now see these men, for they are men with us. No brawls of religious factions threaten the life of our little state. Her simple covenant, subscribed by your malefactors, remains intact; and though civil strife may come, for we know not what God hath in store for us; though our government may be disturbed and rent, as others have been before, the one grand principle that stands at the foundation of all will still remain unmoved. That truth, shining like the star of old when the angels sang their hymns of joy at the incarnation of Divine Love, proclaims to-day, and will proclaim as long as time shall last, the same benediction: 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.'"

As if his soul were raised above the earth upon the eagle wing of his faith, his eye gazing fixedly at the dull gray sky as seeing in prophetic vision the verification of his words in these latter days, he stood before them for a moment unconscious, unmoved. In that instant the storm-clouds parted, the setting sun, as at his rising, shone again, and a flood of golden light poured into the little room and wrapped about the young man's form a mantle of glory. It was as if the approval of heaven were manifested, as when the "glory of the Lord shone round about."

Ruth heard and drank in all. The argument was done; the others passed to the windows to admire the brilliant spectacle displayed upon the face of nature, but she sat still, not yet aroused from her contemplation of that divine truth that had been the theme of what she had heard. Paul was no longer before her; he had gone with the others and was pointing out to Willie, who sat upon his knee, the wonderful caps of snow on every post and rail; but unconsciously her eyes rested still upon his face, as his eloquent words still remained impressed upon her mind. Her mother's voice called her from the hall. As she rose to obey the summons, she met her father's glance fixed upon her face. Why was it that instantly the long lashes dropped over her eyes and the rose hue sprang to her cheek? She could not have told.

The Lord's Day dawned beautiful and clear.

The frosty air was filled with that peculiar, life-giving freshness which a winter morning among the hills of New England can alone give to the atmosphere; the white covering of the earth shone brightly in the sun; the long icicles hung from the eaves of the dwellings, forming a fairy fringe to the low, quaint roofs; and ever and anon great clouds of the finest snow would whirl aloft far above the roof-trees, borne upon the wings of the sea-breeze, and spreading out into the most fragile veils of gauze would settle noiselessly down upon the still streets.

Long before the storm had spent its fury men had been out, breaking a way through the principal streets to the meeting-house, so that when the time for the service arrived even the frail forms of women, wrapped up warmly in their cloaks and furs, braved the loose snow and keen wind, and wended their way to the sanctuary.

Mr. Hathorne's family were not missing from their accustomed seat—he himself, sterner, graver, even than usual; his wife with her calm, devout face, eagerly expectant of the spiritual refreshment to be afforded her soul in the two short hours she should pass in the temple of God; and between them their children, John beside his father; Ruth—her beautiful countenance more lovely from contrast with the hood of dark stuff which she wore—sitting just opposite upon her mother's side of the aisle, with fair Grace beside her and Willie next. The house was a very plain one in which these sturdy Puritans worshiped God. It was a square building, the roof rising to a point in the centre, the rough beams which supported it being left exposed to view. There was no trace of an attempt at elegance or even comeliness in the whole structure, save perhaps the crimson curtain and cushion of the pulpit and the canopy above the seat of the governor. The pews were little more than rude benches of common pine, without cushions, and the floor was covered only with sand strewn in the aisle. Not a trace of paint was to be seen upon the whole structure within or without, and the only coloring it had, a rich, deep shade of brown, was imparted to it by the action of the elements. Upon the pulpit, within reach of the hand of one of the elders, whose seats were in front of the pulpit facing the audience, stood an hour-glass, whose shining sand was oftentimes allowed to empty itself into the lower compartment more than twice before the services were completed. Rank and distinction were observed, more than the division of the congregation into families, in the assignment of the seats to the audience, and the right side of the house was reserved for the male sex, the left for the gentler portion of the assembly. The children were usually placed under the care of persons appointed for the purpose in seats by themselves, and every appearance of uneasiness or irregularity was promptly rebuked by these watchful guardians of the church peace.

If it be remembered that religion was the one great end for which these Puritan pilgrims had severed themselves from their European homes; that it was the only solace of their lives, the chief pleasure and comfort of their desert dwelling-place; and that, therefore, every one looked forward to the Lord's Day as to the coming of a sacred feast of good things,—a better idea may be gained of the assemblage that came together weekly for the worship of God. This rude wooden building was filled to its utmost capacity. The governor was escorted hither by his halberdiers and established beneath the canopy of state; the magistrates and those of the highest rank came next in order; then the rich and influential members of the church; and farther back from the pulpit and around the walls were seated the poorer class and the servants. The high and low, the rich and poor, the former often dressed in costly robes of silk and velvet, in lace ruffs and delicately wrought wide collars, and the latter in their rude leathern garments, all flocked to the sanctuary eager for the words of divine cheer they knew to be awaiting them.

Mr. Hathorne's family was among the wealthiest of the congregation, and he perhaps the most influential of the laymen; therefore, his seat was in a conspicuous position, where the pious occupant could find no difficulty in hearing or seeing, and where he could as easily be seen by all as an example of godliness worthy of the utmost veneration.

Upon this particular occasion there was to be a baptism of children after the close of the sermon. The aged Wilson preached appropriately, taking for his text the familiar passage in which the loving Lord blesseth little children and declareth to men the kingdom which awaits them.

Slowly the old man spoke, with tones of loving reverence describing the deep significance of Christ's act. Eagerly the hearers listened to his words, which were fraught with argument to satisfy the minds of the deeply learned, and yet were simple and plain enough to rivet the attention of young children. It was the friend of all who was speaking, and the affection existing between him and each member of his charge rendered his words of greater effect and more exalted beauty. His arguments were elaborate and his conclusions apparently justly drawn, and the firm-set lips of the stern Puritan fathers were pressed closer together as their convictions were thus ably defended, and new vigor was given to the roots of the faith spreading throughout the fertile soil of their hearts. Mr. Wilson did not suffer the occasion to pass without a violent attack upon the opponents of the doctrines of the church, particularly of the one which was the subject of the morning's discourse. It would have been a dark blot upon the pious teacher's conscience had he neglected so important a duty in those degenerate days, when he had marked with pain the indications of heresy upon this point becoming more frequent every day. As he had entered the church that morning, he had noticed the young man, of whom he had heard evil tidings—which he had communicated, as we have seen, to Mr. Hathorne—seated in a humble position near the door. With compassion he looked upon Paul Wallingford—with compassion for his weakness, for his inability to resist evil, for the error that he feared was creeping into his heart to choke with its tares the beautiful ripening wheat of truth. He had inwardly repeated the young man's name, while he had prayed for divine mercy upon the youthful and headstrong, that they who were going astray might be recalled; and now, as his solemn voice thundered forth the violent denunciation of the deadly sin of departure from holy truth, his eye sought out the glance of the attentive youth, and tried to read in it the index of his soul. But Paul's steadfast look was unmoved; no consciousness of guilt had an abiding-place in his heart, and fearlessly he listened to the piercing words that were meant to bring the rebel to submission.

The sermon ended and the benediction pronounced, again the narrow streets were filled with the congregation returning to their homes. Mr. Hathorne made no remark during the noon meal, but listened attentively to the conversation sustained between his son and their guest, who as usual found many a point suggested by the discourse upon which to differ. At last, as the family were rising from the table, Mr. Hathorne spoke.

"My son," he said, "our faith, praise God! needs no better defence than that it has received this morning. If there was one present who was not prepared to acknowledge the truth, his eyes must have been dazzled by the bright light of argument exhibited by our beloved teacher. No such heresy as that which denies the baptism of innocent babes—babes that the Saviour received—could stand before that blaze, but could only wither away."

Paul's keen eye flashed. He felt that Mr. Hathorne was speaking to his son, but at himself. His lips quivered and his voice trembled as he answered with suppressed emotion:

"'*Believe*, and be baptized.' There was one present, sir, who does not assent to your doctrines, who was not terrified by the scorching words of your preacher. God bless those who are in the right! God bless even the Baptist heretics, if their doctrines are his!"

This was all, but it was enough. In one instant Paul Wallingford had made himself an enemy. From this hour he was to be watched and shunned as a venomous serpent.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WRECKED BOAT.

WITH the going down of the sun the sacred day of the Puritans ended. Paul Wallingford must take his departure for an absence of a week from the household he so dearly loved, from his only home in the Colony of the Bay. There were no handshakings at parting—that would have been too demonstrative of affection for the Puritan taste—only a spoken "good-bye" and a slight bow, and friends might part for months, and that, too, when no means of communication could exist between them in the interval of absence.

Paul hurried away over the brow of Beacon Hill and down the western slope to the river-side. It seemed likely that he would have another hard passage, for during the afternoon the wind had been steadily rising, and it now blew in gusts, whipping the waves of the broad Charles into foam. He summoned the old ferry-man whom he always employed in crossing, and who was expecting his coming as usual after the setting of the sun.

"A hard row we shall have of it," Paul said, cheerily, greeting the old man.

"A clear night, but the wind is dead ahead," answered the boatman as he took his hat from his head and wound a dark cloth about it, confining his hair. "We shall have a long pull and a cold one."

Even as he spoke the water dripping from his oars was freezing into tiny icicles, that glistened in the light of the rising moon. His boat, a large and heavy one, seemed able to buffet any storm, but its very weight was an impediment to progress when the sea was rough, and it was more than one man's labor to keep the boat from drifting before the wind. To-night the old man did not dare to raise the sail; and indeed, had the gale not capsized the craft, it would have rent the canvas into shreds. Paul thought the old man seemed a little loth to put off on such a night, but as he was anxious to begin his studies again in the morning, he took no notice of his reluctance. If they could only get across, there would be no danger in the old man's returning alone, for he would need to do little else than keep his boat before the wind in order to reach his destination.

Old James received his passenger without objection, however, and they commenced their voyage.

"You'll find the old boat heavier than the one you came in," said he to Paul as the young man took an oar. "The small boat wouldn't live a minute in this sea. Are you ready, sir? Give way!" And slowly they drew away from the shore, out upon the dark, white-capped waters.

Not a cloud floated in the atmosphere to obscure the light that fell upon the snow-covered hills which bordered the stream. The full moon and myriads of stars cast their cold beams upon the colder earth below, illuminating its glittering garment with the sparkling of a mine of jewels. In spite of the severe labor that taxed every muscle to the utmost, Paul could not help admiring the scene of which he was the centre. Just astern of their boat the slope of Beacon Hill, its foot and the adjacent shore partially shaded as yet, rose white and silent. On his right the shore trended away to the southward, leaving a wide sheet of water, whose snowy waves were only bounded by the low neck of land uniting Boston with the main land, and on which the surf fell with an unbroken roar. Beyond and behind him were the wood-covered hills of Roxbury and the rich grazing lands of Brookline, then called Muddy River; while a little farther to his left, and still behind him, lay the slightly rising ground of Cambridge, yet separated from him by a weary waste of water and meadowy plain. Upon his left the black waves were all that met his sight, their tops now and then casting their deep foam-fringe up into the moonlight, as if striving to rival the white purity of the surrounding shores, and then, after their glory of a moment, sinking back again into their black obscurity. Now and then, perhaps, a faint light would twinkle out upon the darkness for an instant from the direction of far-off Charlestown, but its gleaming was soon swallowed up in the distance.

Harder and harder yet blew the wind as they labored at the oars and advanced slowly out into the midst of the stream. Tossed hither and thither, sometimes exerting all their powers merely to hold the position they had gained and to keep their direction, sometimes, in a momentary lull, creeping onward at a snail's pace, only a few inches to a stroke, their task became continually more discouraging and hopeless. Visions of the bright fireside he had left began to creep in upon Paul's mind. He saw the glowing logs piled high and lighting up the happy group assembled before them. He almost wished himself back again in their midst conversing with John and—and—gathering inspiration from the dark eyes of an attentive listener, aiding him in his argument more than she knew by her presence and interest. Perhaps they were speaking of him now. Perhaps as Mr.

Hathorne was condemning his bravely-spoken principles, John, the staunch old friend, was defending him, and Grace and—He could not help smiling as he caught himself so busy upon anything but the work of the hour, though his wearied arms had never flagged in their labor and his steady, unheeded strokes had been so vigorous as to pull the old man round and considerably alter their course. A word from his companion recalled him to his work, and, ashamed of his negligence, he resolved to dream no more. But it was hard work; his arms began to be oh so weary, now that he thought of them. "Surely," after a five minutes' silence and straining work, "Mr. Hathorne and John—"

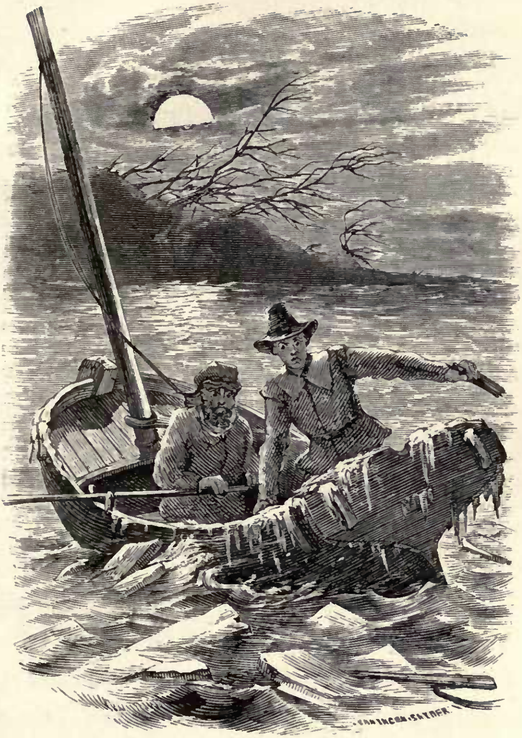
"I haven't the strength I used to have," panted old James, falling forward, almost exhausted, upon his oar. "I cannot do it, sir! We must go back!"

They had rowed perhaps a mile. Paul could not object to turning and retracing their course. He was only sorry to have fatigued his companion so fruitlessly. It was well they stopped as they did, for at the moment the blast seemed to redouble its fury, and it was evident to both that they could have made no farther headway.

Paul bent to his oar; a few vigorous strokes would put them about, when all the rest would be easy.

There came a quick, sharp crack. Old James' heart sank within him. Paul's oar had snapped in twain, and already the blade was far behind them on the water. Quickly as the tossing of the boat would allow, the old man sprang to the stern and running his oar into the water brought the boat before the wind. There was nothing to be done now but this. They might succeed in effecting a landing at some spot where a sandy beach would receive them without harm, but woe betide them if their lot should be the rocks! Old James knew this. There were beaches enough on the outer side of the peninsula; here he only knew of one or two, and these so very small it would be a hopeless task to direct the boat thither in the dark.

Paul had not spoken. As his companion had passed to the stern, he had sprung to the



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bow, comprehending at once the danger, and ready to perform his part in meeting it.

Thus in silence they sped onward through the night, the old man standing upright in the stern, wielding his oar with despairing energy; the young man kneeling in the bow, straining his gaze to pierce the darkness and read the mystery of the still shadowy shore. Was the dark river to be the river of death to them? Was their boat to be indeed, as it seemed to be in the pale light, the bark of Charon? And the shore—what of the shore, where their swift course should end? God help them!

Only a few short moments could now pass before their fate should be decided. Already they knew it would be impossible to make the usual landing-place, for the dashing of the ice ahead told them of the dangers that awaited them. The old boatman redoubled his exertions to force the boat's head toward the low strip of sand whence they had begun their journey, but superhuman strength alone could make sufficient headway to overcome the effects of the drift. Nearer, nearer, ever nearer, the ice and rocks! At last, when there was no hope longer of creeping nearer the shelving beach, old James cast his weight upon the oar, turning the boat's head suddenly upon the coast, and ceased longer to exert either strength or skill, save what was required to keep the boat's bow steady that she might strike, as he said, "bows on."

Paul stepped back from his position and took his seat upon a thwart. His lips were firmly compressed; his face was pale in the moonlight; his heart beat quickly within his bosom.

A sudden dash of spray blinded him, and like a war-horse leaping to the charge the boat sprang forward upon the rocks. Both men were cast upon the bottom of the boat from the violence of the shock. The grinding masses of ice closed in upon the fated boat; the timbers groaned and cracked; there came another deadly crash and a quick, loud cry for help, and Paul remembered nothing more.

That night a messenger awoke the inmates of Mr. Hathorne's house, just as the midnight hour had passed away. A few hurried words were interchanged between the man who had knocked and Hathorne, and the latter hastened with hushed footstep to John's chamber. Ruth could not distinguish the low words spoken by the messenger to her father at the window, but she heard him pass her door and awake her brother. The few minutes of silence that followed were to her an age, and when she heard them both leave the house together, she arose from the side of the sleeping Grace and sought her mother's room. She was disappointed. Mr. Hathorne had only said there had been an accident and he was needed. Stilling her fearing heart, Ruth went back again to Grace, to lie awake and toss uneasily upon her bed until the dawn.

Then Mr. Hathorne came home, his face graver than ever, his eye no longer seeking his daughter's, whose glance eagerly interrogated his face as she met him at the door.

"Ruth," he said, "wrap yourself up warmly and come with me. Ask mother for the strongest brandy she can find, and bring it with you. Never mind now," he continued as he saw her alarmed, inquiring glance; "I will tell you as we go, but hurry and get ready. John is waiting for us."

Poor, trembling maiden! would her limbs fail ere she completed her preparations? She tried to encourage her doubting heart; besides, her pride must sustain her. No one, her father, John, must see the trepidation of her poor little heart; it would have revealed to them what she had not yet dared to confess to herself.

Out into the cold morning air, facing the bleak wind that still blew with violence, the father and daughter hastened away upon their errand. He led her straight up over Beacon Hill and down to the river's bank. Her heart sank within her as she saw the direction he was taking, but she steeled her mind to listen to the account he was giving her of the nature of their mission.

The boat had gone ashore at a point half a mile below the landing-place, upon a little point that formed the northern side of a cove in which a fisherman's hut was situated. Old James had recognized the location, and just as the boat struck had caught the friendly gleam of the light from the window of the humble dwelling; his quick, loud cry for help had been heard and speedily answered by his fellow-craftsman, but it was too late for human aid to save them from the waves. In an instant the poor boat had been shivered on the ice and rocks, and her burden given to the sea. The old fisherman had clung convulsively to the oar, which he still held, as the icy waters closed over him, and thus he was cast upon the shore almost as his preserver reached the spot. Stunned and bleeding, he was quickly borne to the warm hut and placed before the fire. The genial heat recalled his faculties; he opened his eyes and gazed quickly around, and instantly remembering, he started to his feet to hurry again to the shore. He sank back exhausted by the motion, but he waved his friend impatiently away, speaking only the name of him who had been his passenger and companion.

Fruitless had been the search for nearly an hour's time, when, just as he was turning away to retrace his steps, the fisherman saw the gleam of moonlight upon a white, upturned face. It was the work of a moment to hasten to the rock where it lay at some distance from the water, and disengage the prostrate form from the broken ice and fragments of wood that partially imprisoned it. It was found that the bow post and a part of the planks secured to it had remained undisturbed, and caught in this and there held by the entanglement of a rope, the body of the young man had been preserved from a watery grave and driven upon the land. Still, the protection had not been such as to shield the form from contact with the rocks and ice. Bruised and torn and bleeding, with no sense nor movement, Paul lay before the fire the long night through, making no sign of life.

There Ruth found him. His eyes closed, his black hair, wet from the icy waves, matted back from his forehead, his lips still firm as in the instant of peril, his poor hands hanging helplessly at his side as if the life-blood no longer pulsed in their veins,—ah! it was a fearful sight for those dark maiden eyes to meet! She did not murmur, did not sob nor weep, while she knew her poor heart was breaking within her as she gazed. Nobly, with heroic fortitude, she devoted her whole mind to the task before her—the task, she felt, that Heaven had set for her.

Slowly, slowly came back the life to the poor body. The eyes unclosed, then slept again. The pale lips parted, smiled, as if the returning spirit would fain impart to the body some tithe of the beauty of which it had caught a faint, faint gleam. God had saved this life, rewarding the efforts and answering the prayers—God had saved this life, this young life. Should it not now be consecrated unto him, that it might prove his merciful design not to have been in vain? Paul Wallingford lived. Ruth prayed that his life might be spared for the service of the Lord, for the eternal love of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER V.

THE ANXIOUS INQUIRER.

TWO days passed before Paul Wallingford was able to leave the hospitable roof of the fisherman for that of his friends. His strong constitution had proved itself able to resist the heavy pressure brought to bear upon it; and the fearful exposure to which he had been subjected did not result, as it was feared, in a prolonged fever. Upon the third day, then, wrapped warmly in shawls and cloaks, and resting as comfortably as possible upon a bed of pillows, he was transferred in Mr. Hathorne's family-carriage, placed for the occasion upon a sledge, to the home he had left in the height of proud health and happiness.

Every motion was attended with great pain, and his removal occasioned much more exhaustion than he had anticipated. It was therefore of great service to him that soon after his arrival and establishment in a warm, soft bed, he fell into a sweet sleep, from which in the course of a few hours he awoke much refreshed. Every care and attention was shown the invalid by the inmates of the dwelling; Mr. Hathorne came every day to his room to inquire in person for his improvement, and his wife was indefatigable in her efforts for the supply of every comfort and for the speedy return of his health. John and Ruth and Grace, what could they do more, after so much was done by their parents, save to make the slow-going time pass as pleasantly as possible by their presence and agreeable conversation?

After all it was only a week that Paul lay sick in his room, his own natural strength proving the best physician and rapidly repairing the inroads upon his health made by that hour of peril. He had not found it so unpleasant, in spite of the pain he had suffered—and it had been considerable—to be housed up there, for it was a good home and his friends were of the kindest. Besides, he had found much time for reflection—calm reflection, which he felt he needed and that he knew he should not have had if his mind had been taken up during the week, as usual, by his college studies. Paul's mind was very impressible; his narrow escape from death had exerted an influence upon it of no slight moment; and many an hour he had passed alone in the quiet of his sick-room pondering upon the mercy that had spared his life and given him still an opportunity of following out to the end the thoughts that had occupied so much of his attention for the past few months. For his youthful heart had been touched by the study of divine truth, and he, who had been brought up in a family without the light of the love of God, who was the son of a father scorning religion and all its claims, had bestowed more thought upon his obligations to the Creator than ever before. Often when his eyes had been closed as if in sleep and his watcher had stolen softly from the room to seek repose, he had been tracing inwardly the signs of the finger of the Deity, manifest in shaping the whole course of his life. And ever culminating in that dread hour, his meditations came again and again to the ice-cold waves that had swept over him to claim him for their own; to the unconscious hours upon the verge of the other world, when his spirit had been he knew not where; to the returning life; to the present, the time marked out to him by the finger of God as the season for securing for his own the proffered blessings of the gospel of Christ; and as he thought, ofttimes the tears would course their way down his pale cheeks and fall upon his pillow, and he would murmur a prayer that his mother, his mother who was dead, had taught him in his infancy, that God would make him good and keep him in all fear and love.

Oh the poor, poor soul! There may be what men call a good heart, a loving disposition; there may be a great intellect, a giant mind; but if sin be not forgiven, and the soul be not safely folded in the arms of Christ, it will often moan and cry, and lisp its childish prayers for that which it hath not. For the Loving One said: "Come unto me and I will give you rest," and rest can be found nowhere else.

One day toward the last of the week Paul had become much stronger, and had been lying in this way alone, apparently asleep. Ruth, who had left him an hour before, and to whose care her mother had entrusted the patient, entered the room with noiseless tread and sat down to wait till he should awake. Her chair was placed a little behind the bed, where Paul could not easily have seen it had he been awake. She had remained in perfect quiet a few minutes, thinking over the events of the past week, when she was startled by a sob from the invalid. She arose quickly and stood by his side, but as he still seemed asleep, she did not disturb him. She thought that he dreamed, for his eyes were moist with tears, and again the low, smothered sob came as he lay so quietly. But no! Still with eyes closed, the dark lashes quivering on his cheek, his lips murmured and she caught the words—

"O mother, come and teach me again! O Jesus, give me thy love! thy love!"

Ruth heard and her heart beat fast as it breathed a responsive, "Amen." She bent over the young man before her and spoke. She could not hope to withdraw without attracting his attention, and her native delicacy would not allow her to remain silent, as it was evident he was not aware of her presence.

"Paul," she said in a low voice, "you were speaking. Can I do anything for you?"

He started quickly, and his dark eyes looked up into her hers. He saw there that she had heard and understood his words. After gazing long and earnestly into the face of his beautiful watcher, he smiled and said abruptly,

"Yes, Ruth! Get for me the peace you have!" and he laid his hand beseechingly upon hers. She was almost startled at the earnestness of these few simple words. She had not known of the contest that had been going on in the young man's breast; and as she had been surprised to hear his low words spoken to himself, so was her surprise increased at this earnest and sudden appeal to her. In answer to his words, instantly and almost without thought she repeated solemnly the promise of the Redeemer:

"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Then after a little silence: "Paul, I am powerless to give you that for which you ask. You must go to him from whom I received it, and who is ready to give it to you also."

"But how am I to go? And whither? It is easy to say 'Go,' but it is hard, oh so hard, to find the way." He moved uneasily and partly turned away. "I believe my sickness has made me weak in mind as well as in body," he said with a half-bitter smile. "You found me with my eyes wet, my voice overcome by emotion almost too great to allow me to speak, and when I did speak I said that which I had determined to keep locked in my own breast, perhaps for ever. Oh, Ruth, Ruth, pity me and do not think me wholly devoid of sense! I have spoken now, and you may as well know all. I have suffered torments here on this sick bed. The pain of body has been but the sting of a poor fly to the agony that has racked my soul, and in spite of all my striving I am no nearer the end. I would give everything, my life, if I could find the one treasure, the pearl of great price, but I am beginning to think it will never be mine. God can give it to others who are not half so wretched as I am, who are not half so eager for the gift, but he forgets me. Ah, Ruth, you have it and you cannot know; but it is hard, oh, hard indeed to feel its want as I do!"

His voice failed him and he lay silent, overcome by the violence of the storm within his breast. The blessing could not be given to him, he thought. Ah, it was even then nearer the doubter of divine mercy than he dreamed!

Ruth stood by his side in silence still looking down upon his averted face, her hand resting upon the coverlet beneath his. She had never seen before the struggle of a noble spirit, of a spirit yearning for that love higher than any that the world can give. She was at a loss; she was almost alarmed at the violence of his emotion, and she had no hope of giving him the help he so much desired, save by referring the agonized soul to the great Physician. Her own experience had been so totally different from this that she could not understand the young man's feelings. She could hardly remember the time when she had not loved Christ, and when she had been without that blessed peace which that love alone can give. With her there had never been that depth of desire, that almost despair, which she now saw exhibited.

In a moment Paul spoke again. It seemed as if he could not rest an instant, now that the step had been taken, and he had confided to another the thoughts contending in his mind. He motioned Ruth to draw her chair to the bedside and turned toward her.

"You know a part of my past life and history," he said, "and even from that you understand what my advantages have been. You know that I lost my mother while still very young, scarcely more than six years old; that since her death I have never had that loving care which fostered my earliest years; that my father has always been so absorbed in business affairs that he has had little time or care for anything else, even for his son. I do not complain; indeed, I have no reason to do so, as far as this world's comfort and well-being are concerned, for if my father's attention has been absorbed almost entirely by objects extraneous to myself, he has still not forgotten me, providing liberally for every want, and indeed, as I believe, making me the only object for which he is continually exerting every power of body and mind. Having no wife, no other child save me, he labors, as he himself has often said, solely to amass sufficient wealth for me, that I may never want. Still, his immediate attentions are all engrossed in this very pursuit, and while he has thought he was caring for me most there has really been the greatest neglect. I look back now and wonder at myself. Before we came to this country, in our old home in England, I was comparatively happy. It is true, after my studies were done, I was every day, for the most part, entirely alone, having no playmates, as other boys had, and not wishing for them, but I would steal away into the great deserted library and curl myself up in a window-seat with the books for my companions. Hours and hours, when my father was away in the city and the servants were busy about their tasks, I have passed poring over some old book and making its secrets my own. Father would sometimes ask me how I had spent the day, and if I would not like to be with him in the city or where I could find some playmates; but I was happy enough by myself, and as he saw that I was contented he thought no more about me. I used sometimes to wish, when he laid his hand on my head and spoke thus kindly to me, that in the long, dull evenings he would study with me, or talk more to me; but I hardly dared to ask him to do so, he seemed so distant, and I more than half feared him. I remember I always loved to read the Bible particularly. I do not know why; perhaps because I remembered my mother with so much fondness, and was feeling the effects of her instructions. Certainly I never enjoyed reading in any Bible so much as in the one that had been hers.

"So I lived from day to day, until we came here, in my eighteenth year. Since then I have missed my old friends, the books; and, as I had much time to myself until I came to college, I amused myself in trying to recall what I had read previously and in speculating upon the subjects thus presented to my mind. Particularly have I been interested since our arrival here in the subject so much discussed, which was our theme only a few days ago; and our intimacy with Mr. William's family has fostered this interest until I have canvassed the whole ground, and think that I understand it thoroughly. It was this inquiry that first turned my thoughts toward my own condition as a sinner, and for the last few months I have had little peace. I have searched the Scriptures, I have pondered and prayed, I have wept the bitter tears of repentance and desire, and yet the boon is denied me. Oh, Ruth, Ruth, do not say you cannot help me. You are God's child, you are loved by him. He will listen while you pray, though he is deaf to me. Oh, Ruth, that religion, Christ's religion, should be to all others a blessing, but not to me!"

The deepest chord of sympathy trembled in the listening maiden's breast in response to these soul-rending words. What could she do or say for his assistance—she whose experience in such matters had been so small? She knew not. A silent prayer went up from her heart to the ear of the Infinite. A light dawned upon her bewildered mind, and she seized upon the thought as the only hope. Her voice was calm and clear as she spoke in answer to her companion's words. There was no uncertainty of manner, no doubt expressed by her simple declaration, for she felt that in answer to her prayer this truth had come to her mind from heaven, and ere she opened her lips to speak she felt assured that the Lord was with her, giving her the words that were needed by this inquiring soul.

"Paul," she said, "the One from whom you expect this blessing has said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' You have nothing more to do. That is all. Do you believe?"

"God knows I believe, and I love his Son!"

"Then the promise is yours; you are a Christian."

She had laid her hand on his, and her gaze was fixed upon his face. He did not move as she spoke; his eyes gazed into hers, as if drinking in the full meaning of the words that she uttered. He saw in the divine sentence she had repeated a new meaning, fraught with deeper consequence than he had ever dreamed before. The truth began to dawn upon his soul; the grand yet simple truth, that to believe is to *be*, in the Christian world; he had never before realized in all its beauty the meaning of the word Christian. Now he saw the "straight and narrow way," that had seemed to him before a dreary, impassable waste, opening fair and beautiful and leading to the heavenly country. He saw Jesus the gracious Giver of salvation.

"The Saviour has sent you to deliver me and lead me to him," he said, simply. "Ruth, he is my elder brother."

Thick and fast fell her tears upon his hand, tears of devout thanksgiving to him who had led her aright, and who had redeemed this one more soul from sin. She arose hastily and stood by his side. There was yet one thing that must be said.

"Paul, upon that night, that dreadful night—"

"For which I thank my God!"

"I prayed that if your life came back again it might be given to the service of God. That prayer is now answered. I know you will serve him as you best can, with all honesty and earnestness of heart, no matter what way you walk or with what people you cast your lot. But one thing I must ask of you. You do not think as we do; my father's religious doctrines I know cannot be yours, for you have declared it as unmistakably as if you had spoken it in words, when, on the day you left us, you parried his attack. He is already alarmed. Do not bring hatred to his heart and sorrow to our home, for he cannot love an enemy of his church. Pardon me, Paul, for speaking thus, but, believe me, it is for the good of all. Avoid disputes while here, and before you take any step to declare yourself the friend of another people, let me know, that I may prevent, if possible, any discord between us."

"Thank you," he said; "I am glad you have spoken. I will do as you say."

Ruth left him and passed to her own room, and as he lay and pondered upon his new joy, his eyelids closed and he fell into a sweet, childlike sleep.

Not many days passed before Paul was well again, and he returned to his studies with renewed zeal. His absence from college had been no loss to him. Had he not gained that for which he would have given all else, and in comparison with which even life itself was not to be valued? Now there was more purpose in study; everything wore a new aspect in his eyes; the face of nature had never been so beautiful before; the songs of the birds, the ripple of the waves, the sighing of the breezes, all seemed to bear to his mind new messages of love and peace. Even when the wintry storms beat and the earth seemed to shrink in terror beneath the fury of the tempest, there was that in the storm which led his thoughts above; for he turned again to the hour when he had hung between life and death, and remembered the mercy which had restored him to life and strength.

It was with greater pleasure than ever that he looked forward to the return of Saturday, that he might revisit the friends who had so kindly cared for him during his sickness. Their dwelling was now more than ever his home, and the happiest hours of the week were those he spent beneath its roof. There was only one thing to trouble him and mar his happiness. He could not fail to notice a growing coldness on the part of Mr. Hathorne toward himself. He knew not to what it was to be attributed, unless perhaps to suspicions of his heretical principles, of which Ruth had hinted. Mr. Hathorne, however, had shown him the kindest attentions during his sickness, and he was unwilling to believe that this was due merely to the hospitality which the host felt obliged to observe. Mr. Hathorne always received him to his home with some appearance of cordiality; still, there was that in his mien that often made him uncomfortable, and compelled him to feel that he no longer held the warm place in his heart which he had once possessed.

Yet Paul could not find it in his heart to renounce all the pleasures, so dear to him, of this quiet home. All the other members of the family were the same as ever. John was still his staunch friend, standing almost in the position of a brother to him, aiding him by his advice and the experience that his additional years had given; Ruth and Grace were ever ready to make their home pleasant to the lonely student so far away from his own; and Mrs. Hathorne filled as well as she could the place so long ago made vacant by the death of his fondly-remembered mother. Therefore, though it was with pain that he saw the indications of Mr. Hathorne's changed feeling, he was unable to sever himself entirely from all the influences which he felt to be so necessary to his happiness.

Paul had not mistaken Mr. Hathorne's feelings in regard to himself. His answer to the stern Puritan's attack upon his sentiments had revealed his position, and it was impossible for Paul Wallingford, the dissenter from his doctrines, to retain the affection that had begun to spring up in the old man's heart. Paul was not a Christian when he entered into so many arguments with John upon doctrinal points; and it may seem strange that one having so little personal interest at stake should be so ready to offer himself as the champion of any particular faith. But it must be remembered that nearly all his life had been passed in study; and many of the busiest days of his later years—when the tumultuous events of the reign of the second Charles had impressed his thoughtful mind with the importance of the subject—had been devoted to the consideration of the different phases of religious belief that had occasioned such bitter persecutions upon both sides of the sea. Thus it was that he so well understood the great questions of the day, and was enabled, now that the time had come, easily to make a choice for himself.

CHAPTER VI.

PAUL WALLINGFORD'S PURPOSE.

IN the quiet little town of Boston more than two hundred years ago the daily life of our forefathers was very little varied. There were times when the whole community would be stirred by some important proceeding, or by some revolutionary doctrine proclaimed amongst them; but these disturbances would soon subside, and day would follow day with no more important event than the arrival of a vessel from England bearing news from home, and perhaps a carriage consigned to some one of the wealthier citizens, or the visit of a larger number of Indians than usual to the neighborhood for the purpose of trading or of profiting by the teachings of the good apostle, Eliot.

No incident worthy of particular note occurred in the history of our little family for several months after Paul's sickness. The days and weeks went by; the snows of winter gradually disappeared beneath the rays of the warmer sun of spring; the ice-bound coast became free again, and the swollen streams rushed joyfully from their winter fastnesses among the hills, and mingled their life with their parent sea; the willing earth began again to put on her robes of beauty and prepare herself for all the glories of the summer days.

It was one day in the last of May that Paul Wallingford came earlier than usual on Saturday morning to his home with the Hathornes. It was a busy day, as Saturday always was in every New England household, but Paul was gladly welcomed, and his request that Ruth might be spared by her mother for a sail with him on the bay met with no such opposition as he feared. Grace urged her sister to go, and with her help her mother anticipated little trouble in doing all the necessary work. Paul told them he had engaged John to go with them upon their excursion, and so Mrs. Hathorne consented the more readily to Ruth's absence.

The morning was beautiful—just fitted for so rare an occurrence as the excursion which Paul had planned. Seldom could either young men or maidens gather enough time from their many arduous duties to spend a half day in such pastime as our young friends now proposed; therefore it was with the more zest that Paul and Ruth hurried away to the water-side, where the boat awaited them. They found John already upon the sands, and without much delay they pushed out into the bay. Paul was somewhat skilled in the management of a boat, and under his command they sped away from shore with a full sail and a boiling wake at the stern.

An excursionist in the Boston harbor of our days gazes upon an entirely different scene from that which unfolded itself to view in the year 1664 or thereabout. Now there are piles of granite and substantial brick dwellings and warehouses to be left behind; the smoky wharves of South Boston and the closely-built hill lie upon the right; the lumber-strewn yards of East Boston and her skeleton ships stretch along the left shore; and the speeding steam-boat glides away through a maze of vessels, from the size of a skiff to that of the iron-clad man-of-war, past the green-capped granite wall of Fort Independence, past the black and threatening guns of Winthrop and Warren, winding a devious way along the buoyed channel down to the open sea. The islands lie sandy, for the most part, and bare of trees; the tall light-houses lift up their ghostly lengths upon the summits of the steeps; the many sails flit hither and thither over the waters; and all is joyful life and activity. But this is modern Boston.

At the time of our story the beautiful bay wore a far different aspect. Then a little town of low, unpainted wooden houses rested lovingly upon the green hills and valleys of the peninsula, of which a writer of 1634 observed: "It being a neck, and bare of wood, they (the inhabitants) are not troubled with three great annoyances, of wolves, rattlesnakes, and mosquitoes."* The prominent objects to one upon the waters of the bay would be the fort upon "a great broad hill" on the south side and a windmill that crowned the top of a hill "equal in bigness" to the former elevation upon the north side. The islands far and near, save where the hand of man had cleared them for the supply of fuel for the town, were covered with a luxuriant growth of trees, and the shores of the mainland were dark and majestic with their forests that had stood centuries.

Almost always some vessel would be riding at anchor upon the waves, but the ships were so few that they were always objects of the greatest interest, not, as now, passed by with a glance. Indian canoes darted noiselessly about, in and out between the islets, their swarthy navigators wielding the light paddles with inimitable dexterity, propelling and guiding the frail craft with a single turn of the blade. Here and there rafts of fire-wood were floating up toward the town, and lighters laden with hay for the cattle crept silently along. It was all a scene of the rarest beauty—a scene at once of peace and plenty and of busy activity.

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* "New England's Prospect," by William Wood. London, 1634. Page 37.

For some time our three young people sailed on in silence. Paul held the tiller, John sat near the centre of the boat, having the sheet under his care, and Ruth sat between them upon the windward side, her white hand clinging half in fear to the gunwale as the little craft careened before the breeze.

After the first few words of instruction given to John by Paul a silence had fallen upon them as each drank in the placid beauty stretched out before them. It was enough for the eye to gaze, and no word of exclamation was needed to impress upon either of them the delight felt by the others. The water curling at the bow was all that broke the stillness, save at intervals the distant cry of some sailor or the falling of an oar dropped from the hand of a careless boatman. The white gulls wheeled unmolested in their flight, swooping down ever and anon to the waters and resting for a moment their flapping wings, or seizing for their food some luckless fish; and from beneath the waves the silvery mackerel would leap above the surface in fruitless attempts to escape their voracious pursuers.

At last Paul altered their course a few points to avoid a large mass of floating seaweed, in which they would have become entangled, and abruptly broke the silence by calling the attention of the others to an Indian canoe that darted rapidly out from the island they were approaching and moved in their direction as if to meet them.

"Here is an old friend of mine," said Paul, "whom I engaged to meet us here. He is an Indian who has had dealings with us at home, and is an ardent friend of my father. He found me out when he came here a month ago, and we have seen each other many times since. He is a Narragansett, true as steel, and always ready to favor me as he can. I think we shall find he has some dinner for us on the island."

As he thought, the Indian no sooner came within hail than he ceased paddling and pointed to the cove he had left.

"Oh, duck! Roast him duck! Good for eat to the ladee!" he cried out, beckoning them to hasten.

Paul laughed heartily at his Indian friend's language and gesticulations; and as the Indian himself seemed amused thereupon, Ruth and John no longer restrained their merriment, but joined in the laugh.

"Solomon is afraid his dinner will get cold," Paul said. "We must run in and help him eat it, and then sail longer afterward. He has anticipated my orders by a whole hour."

They rapidly neared the shore, the Indian following in his canoe, and it was but a moment before the keel grated on the sandy beach of the little cove and they stepped from the boat. Long Solomon, as he was called, a red-skin of immense stature, lifted his canoe upon the beach above the tide-mark, and then led the way by a small path into the woods. A minute's walk brought them to a little clearing, in the midst of which there was a smouldering fire, before which was the duck roasting upon a spit. The Indian's first care was to turn the duck and rake the fire together; then he conducted the party to a rude cover he had erected out of bark and birch poles. A low seat of stones and moss was ready, and Solomon, waving his hand majestically, signified to Ruth, by a repetition of the word "Ladee, ladee," that she was to rest there until the preparations for dinner were completed.

Their sail of an hour had whetted the appetite of all the party, and it was with great satisfaction that they partook of the meal which Solomon and Paul served to them. The duck was roasted to a turn, and the vegetables, baked in the ashes, were excellent. Solomon stood looking on with great gravity as the three partook of the repast. Ruth and John thought they had never seen so fine a specimen of a man among the natives of the forest, and it was with the greatest admiration they regarded him attentively as he leaned with folded arms against a pine-trunk, the great muscles of his bare and tawny limbs in dignified repose.

Their hunger having been allayed, a pleasant hour was spent beneath the cool shade, the brother and sister trying to induce the Indian to talk with them; but his persevering monosyllables discouraged their attempts, and he soon stepped aside from them and stretched himself out beneath a tree for rest. A very giant he seemed, lying upon the green earth among the great roots, and Ruth was glad such a man was not likely to meet her alone in the forest wandering and lost. She did not know Long Solomon as she did afterward, and as she looked on him she little thought of the devoted service she was yet to receive at his hands.

It was noon when they set sail again and drew away from the island. Paul had made an arrangement with Solomon to meet him during the next week, and the latter, embarking in his canoe, paddled away toward the hills of Dorchester. They watched the blade of his paddle as it flashed in the sunshine, scattering the glistening drops in a bright shower behind him, and they marked the grace with which his powerful arms forced his way over the waves.

"As true a heart as ever beat in white man or red man is in Solomon's breast," said Paul, enthusiastically. "I venture to say I have no truer friend than that dark man of the forest, and there is nothing he would not do for any of our family. My father befriended him upon one occasion, and he will never forget it. I had an object in introducing him to you to-day; if you like his appearance, he is the guide I propose to take on our journey."

"If in other respects he is as good as in cooking a dinner, I could desire no better red-skin," said John, laughing. "You say he is to be trusted? I am loth to believe in any Indian, and really, if it were not for powder and ball, I think we should find few of them friendly."

"Not so with this one," Paul answered. "I know him thoroughly, and I would trust my life in his hands at any moment."

"A good pledge, Paul. I vote for Solomon."

"He is so noble and—" Ruth began.

"We are all of a mind, I see," cried John, smiling. "Roast duck is a capital means of obtaining friends. Solomon was wise to resort to so good an expedient."

"He goes with us, then, next month," said Paul. "Now for a matter of more importance. We have chosen a guide, but perhaps you will not go yourselves when you hear what I have to say. I will tell you my story, and then you can be guided by your own judgment in the case. I could not have set out with you on the journey we anticipate without telling you of this great decision I have made."

Ruth looked up quickly into the speaker's face, divining the words that were to follow. Paul's eyes did not meet hers. He was looking seaward with fixed glance, evidently thinking of nothing but what he was about to say. His face was solemn and earnest as he spoke.

"More than six months ago, when I was sick beneath your roof, there came a day when God revealed himself to me in all the power of the salvation which he has provided for men. As you both know, I at that time resolved that my future life should be very different from the years past indeed, a new life had taken its root in my heart—a new love had sprung up there, that could only influence me to the pursuit I have chosen. Previous to that time my studies had taken such a course that I became well acquainted with all, or nearly all, of the great religious questions of our day. Already I had canvassed with considerable care and the greatest interest the grounds of difference between the faith of the Puritans and the peculiar doctrines of the other smaller sects; the Ranters and Seekers, Brownists and Baptists and Quakers, the Antinomians and Universalists, received as much study and consideration as my facilities would allow. You may have gathered from the conversations we have held together that to all but one of these sects I have been as unable to unite in belief as to the Puritans. You know already my grounds for dissent from the Puritans' doctrines, and of the others it is of little moment what opinions I hold, since but one faith can receive my unqualified assent. It is of this I am to tell you now.

"None of my family or friends have ever cherished, to my knowledge, the sentiments of the Baptists. I am the first to proclaim myself of their number; and I do so now only after the most diligent study, which began before that eventful day six months ago, and has been continued, with earnest prayer for divine guidance, since my heart has been fixed in the love of Christ. I have been wholly unable to make a different decision, and henceforth my lot must be cast in with the Baptists. Had it been possible, I would have united gladly with such dear friends as you have all been to me, but God has seen fit to convince me that such was not my duty. It is my purpose, when I return home next month, to unite with the church there founded by Mr. Williams and his associates by the only true baptism, as I believe it—immersion."

He stopped speaking. His voice had not wavered, his eye had remained as bright and earnest and unflinching before the gaze that he felt was fixed upon him, as if he had not been giving utterance to what they would deem the deepest heresy. Now that he had done speaking, he looked toward John as if expecting some word of reply from him, but his friend had turned from him and was gazing at the distant shore, fixed in deep and grave meditation. After a silence of a few moments, Paul said in a low tone:

"John, tell me that I have not lost my friend. Tell me that our love for each other rested upon a stronger basis than the perfect unity of our opinions."

John turned to him slowly and gazed an instant into Paul's deep, black eye. Then he held him his hand, and as Paul placed his with a glad smile in its grasp, he lifted his other hand to heaven and said gravely:

"The love of our Lord Jesus Christ has made me wiser than you think. I am a Puritan—a member of that sect which was driven from England to their home in the wilderness. As God helps me, I will never cast out a brother of another faith, either from my home or my heart."

Could John have seen the light of gladness that beamed from Ruth's eyes as he spoke he would have had no fear that what he had said would meet with her disapproval; but she had turned away, and her face was lifted toward the bright, calm sky, in thankfulness to God that he had given peace where she had feared only discord. John thought her silence, her averted face, were only to conceal her disapproval.

"It has been a hard duty," said Paul, his face lighted up with joy, "to tell you this, John. But, thank God! it is not as I feared. It would have been a sad, sad day for me had I lost so good a friend as John Hathorne. Oh that I might have had your help in my anxiety! You would not have had me come to this conclusion, I know, but I should have been spared my fears for the friendship I prize so much; and in trying to lead me your way I know I should, in some points, have been helped on in my own. As it is—"

"As it is, I am glad," interrupted John, "for as I know you have come to your decision by yourself, I reverence the more the result of your mental conflict; for I think it must have been a conflict that could bring you to become one in heart and mind with those who suffer so much trouble and persecution."

There was a little silence after John had spoken, and Ruth wondered if it had been Paul's bold arguments that had tempered her brother's opinions to such a degree that he could declare himself averse to the oppression of heresy. She knew that but little more than two years ago, when the Quaker excitement had culminated in the execution of Mary Dyer, he had been opposed to lenient measures, though not approving that grave sentence which brought an aged woman to the scaffold. Since that time he had come to know Paul, and might it not be due in some part to his influence that this change in his sentiments had occurred?

"Tell us, Paul, of your Baptist principles and your way of arriving at them?" John asked, thoughtfully. "I have not studied these subjects so carefully as you have, though I know enough of them to understand my own ground perfectly well. I am a different man from what I was a few years ago; it is no longer with pain and anger I hear other religious sentiments than my own announced and defended; and it is with sorrow I have to confess that for so many years I suffered myself to sympathize with the bitter spirit of intolerance so prevalent in our colony."

Paul was very willing to comply with his friend's request. He thoroughly appreciated the alteration in his character, and was rejoiced that he whom he had thought to make an enemy was still his friend, glad to listen to his voice even though it spoke words for which others would hate him.

"I will begin at the earliest period of my studies in which I began to incline to my present faith," Paul said, lying back upon the thwart and gazing upon the waves that danced merrily up and down in the direction of the fair and graceful form of Ruth, who sat near his side, her dark and thoughtful eyes fixed in deep attention upon his face. "It was three or four years ago that I came naturally from a consideration of the Brownists to that of the Baptists. Of their belief, that they receive their faith directly from Christ and the apostles, I will not now speak, for you will want to debate that point with me; but I will only tell you the simple story of how I found myself to be of their number. In the course of my reading I came down through the persecution of the times of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, when the fires of Smithfield were kindled alike for Papists and Baptists, to the tyranny of Archbishop Laud in the reign of Charles I., and to the heartrending accounts of the fines, imprisonments, mutilations, brandings, and tortures of all kinds inflicted by that cruel servant of the church. His pretensions to mercy and his claim that he was performing the duty laid on him by the meek and gentle and forgiving Saviour only made his character the more hideous and revolting in my eyes. As I read of these terrible scenes, I shuddered at the violence of the persecutors, and an irresistible impulse came upon me to believe rather with the suffering martyrs than with the monsters of cruelty who oppressed them. Then recurred to my mind the words of one of these Christians, who had endured much for the cause in common with his brethren. Speaking of his persecutors, he had said: 'Be these, I pray you, the sheep whom Christ hath sent forth in the midst of wolves? can the sheep persecute the wolf? Doth Abel kill Cain? Doth David, though he might, kill Saul? Doth he which is born of the Spirit kill him that is born after the flesh?' I could only answer, Nay! the sheep whom Christ hath sent forth are the weak rather than the strong; the birth of the Spirit is not for the unbridled license of anger, malice, and revenge. The children of God are they who are poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven: the children of God are they who are merciful; for they shall obtain mercy; and blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Though my heart was sickened within me, I tried not to think uncharitably of those whose mistaken zeal pursued to the death their less powerful opponents in faith, but in spite of all, I could only believe that the help of God was with those who suffered so much for his sake.

"Then a noble act of Christian heroism provoked my admiration. Fifty years ago John Robinson, the celebrated Puritan divine to whom is due the early emigration of the Pilgrims to this country, wrote in defence of the civil power to punish 'religious actions,' thus giving his authority in support of the principles which have actuated the course of the Colony of the Bay since its foundation to the present day. A man of superior abilities, John Smyth, who had been an Episcopal clergyman, controverted these opinions, and at one time the contest waxed very warm, the arguments upon either side exciting much attention from the friends and enemies of both parties. This John Smyth, as you know, was the celebrated Baptist pastor suffering with his brethren upon the continent at the time of which I speak. His is the deed that so forcibly impressed me. His persecuted brethren in England were bearing the haughty rule of King James and his Puritanic parliaments, suffering much from their efforts to suppress the Baptist faith, though hoping for better times from the disagreements between the Puritans and James and the concealed dislike of the former for their sovereign. Smyth could not see his brethren in distress and needing his assistance without moving for their relief; gathering the exiles together, he placed himself at their head as their pastor, and returned to London. Christ had told his disciples when here on earth that those who ministered to their suffering brethren ministered to him; and that they might discharge this Christian duty, Smyth and his brethren braved the wrath of a king and the consequences of a return from exile. This act of moral heroism, though others may be found to equal or even to surpass it, coming to my attention at the opportune moment, demanded and gained at once my admiration and love for men who could so boldly execute Christ's commands in the face of the mightiest earthly power.

"There was a difference, too, in the way in which this sect bore their persecutions that distinguished them from other sects. Look not only at those I have spoken of before, but also at that noble champion of religious liberty and of Baptist principles, Roger Williams, your friend and mine, thank God! His mildness and affecting sufferance of ill, and his noble, Christian benevolence toward those who dissent from his religious views, illustrate the general character of the Baptists in this respect.

"Now all these were but the means of bringing my attention to the earnest study of the Baptist doctrines, and of these how can I speak so that you, who do not believe in them, can appreciate my feelings in having found in them the nearest approach to the perfect church of Christ? Let me say nothing to wound your feelings, for I respect the opinions of your church, as you serve still the same Master; but, however my enthusiasm may lead me to defend my new-found faith, remember that I am still filled with all the ardor of a new disciple, and excuse on this ground all I may say amiss.

"The Baptists wish for no higher testimony than the words of the great Founder of the church, Christ himself; and when they cite his declarations in favor of their belief and practice, they consider that all which is necessary is done. I turned immediately, then, to their rule of faith, the New Testament, and I was not disappointed. In those sacred pages I read the confirmation in Christ's words and those of the apostles of the assertions of the Baptists. I found that such only as believed in Christ were baptized and brought into the churches, and that baptism was preceded by going down into the water, and was called a burial with Christ—that it was an immersion. I passed many days and often the nights also in a careful study of what had begun to seem to me the way of truth.

"Then after a while, and when my thoughts were still troubled, there came the day when my heart was opened to receive the light of the Saviour's love. It was to me as if I heard the word of God coming out of heaven, calling me to some work for the Lord Jesus—a work of which I then only had the foreshadowing, but which I have now accepted in all its fullness as my own. Since that day I have striven to learn the duty God has laid upon me, and now I have discovered that whereto I am called, and as he shall help me I will try to serve him faithfully to the end."

A little pause and then he continued:

"I know the troubles I am to expect as a minister proclaiming the doctrines of a small, despised, and persecuted people, but I trust I shall have the strength requisite for my task. I may be rejected of men, but so was Jesus before me; I may be reviled and hated, and may suffer pain both physical and spiritual, but his agony was greater than mine can ever be; I may even be led to death, as others have been before me, but I shall be at the foot of that cross whereon the Son of man breathed out his life for me, and if I may gaze up into his face and hear from his lips the blessed words, 'This day thou shalt be with me in paradise,' gladly shall I suffer for his sake."

The face of the youthful speaker shone with the fervor of his hope. He had laid aside his hat, and the breeze lifted his black hair from his brow and waved it back over his temples; his eye beamed with a heavenly radiance as he spoke of the trial that might be in store for him, and his cheeks wore a rosy flush. His two friends looked upon him with a thrill of admiration as he spoke so calmly of what he hoped and feared, and when by a common impulse their glance turned upon each other, they as quickly shunned each other's gaze, as if conscious of a secret to be possessed alone by the individual soul.

Paul turned to John after a moment's silence, and said in a tone of unfeigned joy:

"My dear old friend, I shall have one at least to remain with me, whatever may be the issue of my other friendships. I know that most of my other acquaintances here will shun me—indeed I have lost some of them already—but those I love best are mine still. Ruth," and he turned suddenly to her, "you too will not leave me?"

The maiden laid her hand in his and answered, "No!"

CHAPTER VII.

A STORM IN THE FAMILY.

THE visit to Providence Plantations had long been talked of by the little family of our friends, and now, when at length the project had become a settled plan, many an evening was spent in discussing the subject and in completing arrangements for the journey.

One evening a few days after the events recorded in the last chapter, when the family were assembled after supper and there had been some talk about the event which engrossed the attention of all, Mr. Hathorne laid aside the document he had been perusing, and surprised Ruth by the announcement that he had bought a horse for her use, and that he had that day arrived in a small vessel from England. He said that John should ride with her on the following day, and he hoped she would be satisfied with the animal.

The tears sprang quickly to her eyes as Ruth thanked her father for his valuable gift; yet it was with a feeling almost of annoyance that she recognized his thoughtful attention to her wants, for now she must disclose to him disagreeable tidings that might put a stop to their journey and render his gift of no avail for the immediate purpose for which it was bought. Neither she nor John, from a natural dislike of imparting disagreeable news, had informed their father of Paul's important decision. But now they both felt that the discovery could no longer be deferred. Thus it was that Ruth had other feelings than mere pleasure and gratitude awakened by her father's kindness. She had little doubt that her father would forbid her journey when he knew of their friend's change of opinion, and it was with the more sorrow that she learned of his care for her ease and comfort while upon the road through the wilderness. She arose from her seat at the opposite side of the table and came round to him. Then she put her arm about his neck as she stood by his chair and kissed him before she spoke.

What is there in a woman's kiss so calming to the spirit, so purifying to the soul? I think a wicked man could not withstand that potent charm from the lips of a mother, a wife, a daughter. His sin must shrink back within itself, and leave at least a little room in his heart for good to enter and occupy as its abiding-place.

"Father, I have something to tell you," Ruth began. "Perhaps this journey which we have been planning so long a time, and for which you have provided me with this beautiful present, may never be made. You will object, I know, to have me go so far from home with one whom you will look upon as no longer a proper companion. Paul has declared himself the heretic you feared so long ago he would become. He told us all, John and myself, when we were sailing in the harbor a few days ago. If you reject him as an unsafe companion for your children, I know you will do so admiring the frankness with which he has refused to allow them to make this journey with him while his true sentiments were concealed. His purpose is to become a member of the Baptist Church in Providence when he arrives there, and his life is to be passed in the ministry of the truth as he believes it."

Mr. Hathorne remained silent for a moment; then springing hastily to his feet, and thrusting his daughter rudely aside, he paced the room in a storm of angry excitement. His children had never seen him so excited before, and indeed it generally required strong, very strong reason to arouse to such a degree the dormant fires of indignation in the staid Puritan character. It was with surprise and sorrow that the two eldest witnessed this unusual outbreak of emotion; and though their reverence for their parent was undiminished, they could never reflect upon the event of that evening without a feeling of regret, of disappointment, mingled with their love.

He had feared this from the first. He had cherished a serpent in the security of his home, and now the venomous reptile was ready to turn upon its preserver. Do what he might, the fact was undeniable, irrevocable—he had nourished heresy beneath his roof, he had soiled his fair fame by contact with that sin which the church feared most. Years of labor were undone; his heart's best hopes and desires were retarded in their accomplishment; and the cause of God, through his means partly, had received a check. He was ready to curse the day whose light had brought Paul Wallingford to his dwelling, and in his heart to renounce the friendship whose obligation had presented the young man to his attention.

At last, when he became a little calmer, when the kiss, perhaps, was beginning to do its work, Ruth went to him in the strength of her filial affection and womanhood, and taking his hand, she led him back to his seat. He sat for a long time in moody silence, no one daring to interrupt his meditations. Only Ruth stood behind him, and smoothed his gray hairs with her hand.

"Ruth," he said, slowly, "I believe the young man has acted as his conscience, influenced perhaps by the early instructions of the mistaken people around him, has led him; but I cannot make any difference in my conduct on this account. He has evil in his heart and poison in his tongue, and though I have ever loved him in the past as a friend and as a friend's friend, I cannot receive him beneath my roof in the future. He sets himself as an opposer of my church; to me therefore he can be no longer a friend. He has my good wishes for the future, but henceforth his path and that of me and mine through life must be different. John, you of course are at liberty to proceed as you think fit; as for Ruth, she will remain at home this summer, and as I forbid your friend my roof, I shall expect her to see him no more."

This was all. The family Bible was brought, and with unmoved countenance Mr. Hathorne proceeded with the closing service of the day, and then the members of the household with sad hearts separated for the night.

Ruth slept little, for her disappointment was a heavy one, and the pleasant dream of months was not to be dissipated without much sorrow.

She had anticipated with so much joy the pleasure and excitement of the journey; she had longed so much for a renewal of the close intimacy that had sprung up years before between herself and the sweet-tempered daughter of Mr. Williams, and she had not feared that her friend Mary, though her senior by more than a decade and separated from her for so long a time, would forget one who had loved her so dearly. But now it must all be given up—thought of no more—for it could only bring her mind fresh regret, disappointment, and pain.

Nor was this all; she was sorry that their young friend would be wounded and possibly his affections estranged by this severe act of her father. She knew the susceptibility of his feelings, and that so great an affront would be deeply felt, even though he understood that it was not any personal reason that had caused his banishment from their family circle. On the other hand, she was glad that his college course was finished, for now perhaps his duties would not require his presence in the Bay, and thus the want of what he had formerly enjoyed would be felt less; and if John would still make the journey as anticipated, it would be a proof to Paul that all hearts were not estranged from him. At last, just as the gray light began to dawn, her weary eyes closed in sleep.

As was very natural, Mr. Hathorne was hardly satisfied with himself. His rest, too, was for a time much disturbed, and before he slept he began to wish he had not been so hasty, though he did not repent of the mandate given—that Paul should no longer be received beneath his roof. He had no personal objection to the young man; he had respected and even loved him, as he said, and it troubled him that he had made his rejection of his friendship so severe. He even regretted that he had forbidden his daughter her anticipated pleasure; though he thought he should not be sorry ultimately, if in reality, as he suspected, there was an attachment springing up between her and Paul. But as for this, he had noticed of late that Grace claimed a larger share of the young man's attention than her elder sister, and he really entertained no serious fears upon this point.

Besides all this, he had promised that his daughters should visit him who had been so good a friend to him in Providence. He could not now withdraw his promise without stating his reasons. It was likely that his refusal to let Ruth make the visit and his conduct toward Paul would entirely estrange Mr. Williams from him. This alone was an important consideration with him, but there were other considerations, for he had business interests which were somewhat under the control of Mr. Williams and others in Providence. In trading with the natives, Mr. Williams held the first place in their confidence and esteem; and this good feeling for their friend Mr. Hathorne had used to good advantage, and it would now be a great detriment to his interests to lose so powerful an alliance. Mr. Williams, though unable to enter the colony of the Bay from the prohibition of the government, had consented nevertheless to assist Mr. Hathorne in this way, and one purpose of John's visit to the Plantations was to complete further business arrangements there through the good man's influence.

Considering all things, therefore, the mind of Mr. Hathorne was not a little disturbed, and as reflection continued he found the more cause to wish he had not been so hasty.

If Ruth upon her sleepless bed could have known all that was passing in her father's mind, perhaps she would not have seen so much cause for disappointment and regret. But unfortunately she did not know her father's character well enough to admit of more favorable hopes.

When the family assembled around the breakfast-table, Ruth greeted her parents in the usual way, and wore her accustomed cheerful mien, though the faces of the others had not lost the shade left by the unpleasant incident of the night before. Mr. Hathorne was stern and grave, seldom speaking during the meal, and casting upon the rest a gloom which the cheerful face of Ruth and the forced gayety of Grace could not dissipate. When he arose from the table, he said to John—and this was the only allusion to the subject—

"John, I shall expect you to go to Providence as arranged, so you can continue your preparations." Then he went away to his warehouse.

Mr. Hathorne was not wholly hypocritical in character; though, as may be seen, mingled in large proportion with his true love for the church and its religion was a veneration for worldly interests that one would not expect to find in a heart unfeignedly devout. In those days the church was so closely connected with every department of life, and held such great influence in affairs of government, that it would have been impossible for a man of Mr. Hathorne's aspirations to meet with any success outside of its pale. Therefore, while he was really interested for the welfare of his church, he still was keenly alive to his own requirements; and by taking a very prominent stand in religious matters, he sought to advance at the same time the cause of the Puritan and the interests of the private individual. None of his fellow-townsmen, however, would have suspected him of any but the most disinterested motives, and, indeed, he himself was hardly aware of the near approach he made to the scribe and Pharisee. Let us not judge him too harshly. The whole tendency of the times was, perhaps, such as would readily lead to this great error; and if a man like Mr. Hathorne, respected and honored alike as a man and Christian, was led into it, let us hope that his eyes were blinded by the fanaticism of the day.

There was a change in his demeanor at noon. The firm frigidity had departed, and his face relaxed once or twice into a genial smile. He spoke, too, of John's departure with some interest, and even went so far as to express regret that Ruth must remain. He said he hardly thought it safe to send her away under such pernicious influences, though of course he had every confidence in her Christian steadfastness. The storm was over, and perhaps the sun would yet shine again, though not as brightly as before.

In the afternoon two horses were brought to the door with a message from Mr. Hathorne that John was very busy, and he himself would accompany his daughter upon her ride. He wished to see for himself the excellence of the newly-purchased animal. While Ruth was dressing he returned, and was ready when she issued from her room.

It was a happy ride for Ruth, in spite of her disappointment. They took the road out over the Neck, and thence through Roxbury by a woody, winding way to Cambridge, and home by the ferry across Charles River. The horse, a fine black animal, with clean limbs, small head, and full, broad neck and breast, was in every respect satisfactory, sure-footed and swift, afraid of nothing, though at first a little timid about entering the boat on the river, and gentle enough for a lady's use. Ruth was delighted; and her warm expressions of admiration, coupled with her gratitude to her father for his gift, were all that was needed to determine Mr. Hathorne that he had been unnecessarily severe to deprive his daughter of so great a pleasure as her journey would be to her. Ere they alighted at their door he had almost decided to allow their former plans to be carried out.

"I have changed my mind," he said, suddenly, in the evening, as he sat in his happy home surrounded by his family; "Ruth shall go with John. If I cannot trust my children to remain firm in the faith of their father when exposed to such slight opposing influence as young Wallingford's generous nature will give them, I can have little confidence in the principles themselves which constitute that faith. But God forbid that the taint of heresy should come upon them!

"As I said last night, I have always respected Wallingford. I can no longer extend my hospitality to him. Nevertheless, I pity him, and pray for him that his errors may be brought to his clear sight; and I tell you frankly, my daughter, it is with this end in view, as one of my reasons that I send you with John, that the influence may be strong upon this mistaken young man, and that he may yet be reclaimed."

Ruth tearfully thanked her father and went away to her room. Poor, foolish little heart! as she had not slept before for sorrow, so to-night she lay awake from very joy.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE JOURNEY TO PROVIDENCE.

PAUL came no more to Mr. Hathorne's dwelling, no more to the roof he had rejoiced to call his home; and though he had expected to be shut out by its doors, now that he actually found them closed against him the world seemed darker than he had thought it would. In the solitude of his little room at college the sense of loneliness pressed so heavily upon him that he was glad he was so soon to leave it for his distant home. John had ridden over to see him the morning after Ruth's ride with her father, and had told him everything that occurred the day before. It was some comfort to Paul that both John and Ruth were as much his friends as ever, and he was surprised as well as rejoiced that their journey with him was not to be given up but it was none the easier to bear that he must no longer see them save at the rare intervals when John could ride over to Cambridge, and Ruth— But he should not see her again, probably, until they met for their journey.

It was yet three weeks before the collegiate year would close and they would leave Boston, but the time passed quickly enough to Ruth and John, busied as they were with the preparations necessary for such an important event; and even to Paul, though so lonely and sometimes almost disheartened, it did not seem so very long, for there was much to hold his attention—his closing examinations, his preparation for the commencement, and his provision for departure. Paul saw Ruth but twice before they were to set out for Providence. Once, as Mr. Hathorne was riding with his daughter past the college, they met him in the street; when he bowed Ruth smiled a glad recognition, but her father passed him by without notice. The second time was on commencement-day—that day of so much importance in the little colony, when every one who could leave home or business, though requiring weeks of anxious preparation, pressed on eagerly to Cambridge to attend upon the exercises of the occasion. Paul had seen John earlier in the morning, but he did not know of Ruth's presence until he ascended the stage to deliver his oration. Then his eyes met hers. Her calm, thoughtful face was full of eager expectation, and as he gazed upon it he was conscious of a thrill of delight passing through his frame. He felt that his audience had vanished away, that in that one attentive listener was centred all his interest. The eloquent words fell from his lips with a pathos seldom known within the walls of the old building, and his deep, clear voice, in perfect modulations, was like music to the ear. When he finished there was a breathless silence for an instant, and then a loud murmur of admiration ran through the assembly. Paul heard but did not heed it. He was already pressing his way to where Ruth sat, and though he could speak but a word with her, for the crowd was passing from the building and her father's voice spoke to her from a little distance, he counted her welcome smile of approbation of more value than all the applause of the multitude.

So at last the day came when they were to leave Boston. It was a bright, pleasant day, the soft breezes murmuring through the trees, and the birds caroling their praises to the God who had made the world so beautiful. Ruth arose with a glad heart as soon as the early light peeped in at the window. There were still a few things remaining to be done—her chickens to be fed for the last time for many weeks; the mossy seat beneath the rose-covered bower in the garden to be visited, the place where so many happy hours had been passed with her mother and Grace; then returning to her room, there was her Bible to pack and the last charges to be given to Grace, whom she awoke with a kiss; there were "good-byes" to be said through her sister to many a fair friend, and messages too many to be all remembered; and last, when little Willie, sleeping in his bed, had been kissed and the horses stood waiting at the door, when the breakfast had been tasted but not eaten, and all were assembled to bid the travelers farewell, her mother hung so long and fondly on her neck that Ruth almost wished she could give up the journey, even at this late hour, and let John ride away alone. But quickly her brother called her from the courtyard, and almost before she knew it she was in the saddle and waving a last adieu with her little gloved hand as they rode out into the street.

We have iron horses now and a clear, level, unobstructed way over which we can speed at the rate of twenty miles an hour toward the city that Roger Williams founded more than two centuries ago. To us it may seem worthy of a smile that emotion should be excited by a parting for so short a distance as that which can be annihilated by a two hours' pleasant ride. But let it be remembered that in the days of our story it was a journey of perhaps four or five days, by rough and, in many places, perilous roads, oftentimes so winding that they would turn again toward the point from which they had set out; and after the traveler had gone beyond the vicinity of the settled towns only foot-paths through the thick forests would lead to his destination. It was an undertaking of some danger for Ruth, and she felt that, before the end of the journey was reached, she should need all the strength and fortitude she could summon to her aid. It was no light thing for men to undertake the passage of a wilderness haunted by wild beasts, and possibly hostile Indians; and no expedition of the kind was ever made without an abundant supply of firearms and a strong band to use them. For a woman, then, it was doubly difficult, and a task not very often attempted. Our friends, however, had completed the necessary arrangements very satisfactorily, and they anticipated no trouble during the three or four days they should spend on the way; and though the tears of the mother and daughter could not be restrained at parting, the excitement of the road soon banished all disquieting thoughts from the mind of Ruth, and her spirits regained their wonted flow. They were to meet Paul at a point between Cambridge and Watertown, where the guide was also to join them; thence they were to proceed the rest of the way together, their party having been completed by this meeting.

Before they arrived at the appointed place they met Paul, who had grown tired of waiting for them, and had ridden slowly in the direction from which they were to come. He was accompanied by Long Solomon, who was to act as their guide through the forest. The stern face of the red man was lighted up by a passing gleam of intelligent joy as he greeted Ruth with his extended hand after the manner of the pale faces, but his satisfaction was so suppressed and its manifestation so momentary, in accordance with the native stoicism of the Indian character, that Ruth did not notice it. Paul, however, who was better acquainted with the man's habits, and who watched his countenance narrowly as Ruth spoke to him, was gratified by what he saw, for he knew that their safety for the journey depended in great measure upon the Indian. He was pleased, therefore, to see his evident interest in Ruth.

After a few minutes' delay the party proceeded on their way, taking up now the order of march that they intended to preserve during the whole journey. Though as yet his services were not required, since they would have a good road for many miles, Long Solomon took the advance, moderating his pace to the speed of the party. The Indian was on foot, but he had the red man's power of endurance, and he found no difficulty in keeping by the side of those who were mounted. Following in the rear of Solomon and in the immediate van of the party, were two hardy Puritan yeomen, who had been engaged to accompany the expedition for the better protection of the travelers. Each of these men was armed with a musket slung at the back, a sword and pike, the latter at least ten feet in length besides the spear-head at the end. After them rode John and Paul with Ruth between them, while the rear was brought up by two friendly Indians, whose confidence had been tested during the Pequod war, and who often served upon occasions like the present.

John was mounted upon a strong and heavy roan, an animal devoid of any trace of beauty, but well adapted to the rough travel of the wilderness. The young Puritan's accoutrements were all of a like character, utility alone having been consulted in their preparation and disposal about his person. He wore at his side a sword, as did the other white men of the party, and two formidable pistols were at his saddle-bow, ready for his hand at an instant's notice.

Ruth's whole appearance was in striking contrast to that of her brother. Her slight figure was habited in a plain dress of gray, which fell at the side of her horse in flowing folds that waved gently backward in the breeze. A case containing a cup and a small platter of silver, for her use at meals, was strapped upon the horn of the saddle, while a small leathern roll at the back of the saddle contained all the other conveniences for the journey.

Paul was well equipped in every respect, riding an iron-gray horse of tried endurance, and being even more fully armed than John. He was in the best of spirits, overjoyed at meeting Ruth again and at the prospect of so pleasant a journey to his home.

They rode only a few miles beyond Watertown, when a halt was made because of the excessive heat. It was their plan to travel during the earlier and later hours of each day, thereby lengthening the time of the journey, but escaping the great fatigue of summer travel over the rough roads and difficult bridle-paths which they would have to follow. A little apart from the road, beneath the protecting shade of some tall chestnuts that formed a grove by themselves, they alighted and disposed themselves to get what rest they could for the few hours they should remain. Paul found an uncovered and twisted root that formed a sort of natural seat, and here Ruth was comfortably settled, with the two young men reclining near her upon the soft turf. Withal, it was a picturesque group.

The horses were tethered in the back ground, and near them stood the two sturdy men, the guard of the party, leaning idly against a huge trunk and conversing in low tones; the three Indians were stretched at length on the sward in a group by themselves, their easy attitude determined by their native grace. At a little distance a pure spring bubbled up from beneath a large overhanging rock, and after spreading out in a pool of clear brightness, the waters rippled over a pebbly bed till they were lost among the trees.

Our young people were fully alive to the beauties of the scene, and for some time, as often the perfection of nature is best enjoyed in silence, they did not break the quiet with their voices. At last it was noticed that Solomon had withdrawn from his companions and was following the little stream away into the forest. Paul marked the fact, and asked one of the natives whom he called to him if the pool before them was called the Cold Water of Spring-time—*Saunkopaugot Sequan* in the melodious Narragansett tongue. The answer was in the affirmative, and explained to Paul the reason of Solomon's departure; and as they rested beneath the shade, he told the others the Indian's story.

In earlier years, when still the white man had not leveled the trees of the forest nor frightened the timid deer from their leafy haunts, when the man who was now old had seen but twenty summers, he had been a man of note in his tribe. In their significant language he was known as the Snake of the Forest, wily, watchful, deadly as the reptile whose name he bore. The aim of his arrow was sure, its poison fatal; and whether in the hunt or upon the war-path, it needed but the name of the Snake to be known in the band, and every heart was confident of success. Thus for ten years more, after the landing of the white men at Plymouth, the Indian chief was untamed; but then there came a day when the man who would only take the Indians' lands by fair purchase invited the Snake to a conference. The fierce native had never before looked upon the face of a white invader of his realms with aught but fury in his eye, but now his savage heart was not proof against the righteous dealings, the kind consideration, the winning mildness of Roger Williams. As the hearts of all the natives brought into contact with that peculiarly gifted man were allied to his in friendship, so the cunning Snake of the Forest, the sworn enemy of the pale-faced foe, yielded to the benign influence, and was glad of the white man's love. From that day there was a change in the stern chief's character. He was still successful in the hunt; his name was no less a terror to his enemies than it had ever been; but his enemies were fewer; he sought more the friendship of the whites, particularly striving for further intercourse with the man who had gained his love. It was one summer while he was encamped in the neighborhood of the trading-post established by Roger Williams that an event occurred which influenced greatly his future life. An epidemic malarious fever broke out in his tribe and snatched away the lives of hundreds of those about him. Day after day the braves fell; there was no way of meeting this destroyer; the cunning and the bravery of the Snake could do no good; he must be passive and witness the ghastly stride of Death without an attempt to check his progress. The chief sat in the door of his tent and saw his people die. Soon the living would be too few to bear away the dead; soon he too should lie beneath the ground with his bow at his side and the arrows resting on his breast. Then at last there came some help. The white father learned of their distress, and moved from lodge to lodge, his presence bringing hope and often the beginning of a return of health to the dying. Slowly the disease began to abate, but it was not till the red man's heart had been well stricken; the youth, his only son, his pride and hope for the future, the destined chief of his people, had been taken from his side, and his lodge was vacant.

As the season came, the broken chief with the poor remnant of his tribe departed for their hunting-grounds farther in the interior of the country; and as the years passed on the evil began to be repaired and his people approached their former number. But the heart of the red man never recovered the blow given it by the hand of God. His family had perished; the braves with whom he had trodden the war-path so often had been destroyed; the high rank of his tribe was gone for ever; his pride was extinguished, and he hoped no more.

At last, in one of the seasons when he was encamped near Providence, the man whom this poor son of the forest almost worshiped came to visit him in his lodge. While partaking of his hospitality, Mr. Williams, as was his wont, conversed cheerfully with him of the religion of Christ. This was not the first time the chief had listened to the good man's words, but now his soul was ready for God's blessing. He saw how unsatisfactory was the religion of his fathers, how powerless it was to console and heal the broken heart. He listened entranced to the simple words that fell from the good man's lips, and when he departed from his dwelling, he prayed him to teach him further of the Master whom he longed to serve. Several times after this the Indian sought interviews with his friend, and he treasured up in his heart the instruction he received. Then for days he wandered in the forest, avoiding the companionship of his fellows, particularly that of his tribe. The solitude of the woods awed his soul; the God of the white men was everywhere, even here with him as he sat by his fire at night pondering the mighty truths that were taking fast hold upon his soul; and, more than this, Christ, the Son of God, was speaking to him, telling him of his death for man. At length, as it comes to the heart of every chosen one, the conviction came to him that for love, for infinite, holy, divine love for poor sinful man, God's Son could even die; and in that death he saw the proof of the love of Jesus to himself. Then he returned to seek his friend, but in this he was doomed to disappointment, for Mr. Williams had sailed the day before upon his first voyage to England. Without counsel, but acting in accordance with the promptings of his heart, he returned to his tribe. He told them of the change in himself; of his long struggle and of the new God, the only true and great Father, the ever-blessed Saviour whom he had found. He had not expected the storm of fury that burst upon him from those who had been accustomed to submit to his authority. In his brief absence an enemy had risen up to dispute his sway, and now this man stirred up the people against him, seizing eagerly the pretext offered by his chief's abjuration of the religion of his ancestors. Stung to the quick by the ingratitude of his people, the forsaken chief wandered away into voluntary exile. He had now no friend but God, but as he turned his back upon the familiar lodge, his heart, though filled with sadness, yet found no disappointment in the love of his Saviour, and he was glad because this Friend would be always the same, not only for this life, but for the great future beyond the grave.

The haunts of the red man were now forsaken. He came to look upon the beautiful town near the mouth of the Mooshausick as his home, for there he found that true sympathy that he so much needed. Here he dwelt for years, subsisting upon the products of his skill in the hunt, and occasionally acting as a guide to travelers between the settlements, and ever adding from day to day to his knowledge of the great truths whose cause he had espoused.

At last, in the year 1650, he was employed to conduct the Reverend John Clarke and his companions upon their journey to the bay, and on this eventful occasion his conviction became settled that it was his duty to unite with the body of Christians in whose midst he had dwelt so long, and whose doctrines his simple mind found no difficulty in accepting. The heart of the man was touched by the persecution his friends suffered in Boston—by their imprisonment and the fines imposed upon them or the alternative of public scourging. When he was to conduct Mr. Clarke back again to Newport, he informed him of his desire to become a member of the visible church of Christ; and with his native impetuosity he requested that he might be baptized at once. Upon their way they came to the beautiful spring of water by which this story was now told, and the Indian, leading the way along the course of the little stream for nearly a mile, until it spread out into a little lake, was baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

It was evident to both of his listeners, now that Paul had told them the history of their guide, whither Solomon had gone, and the eyes of Ruth filled with sympathetic tears as she thought of the lonely red man sitting by the side of the waves beneath which he had been buried in baptism, recalling to his mind the blessed hour and pondering upon the joys and the terrible sorrows of the past. His history had been varied—its commencement brilliant, and its later years solitary and sad, yet surrounded with a halo of peace such as the world can neither give nor take away. Hence it impressed her mind forcibly, and gave rise to a feeling of affectionate regard and almost reverence for the man which she had not hitherto possessed. But her thoughts could not dwell longer upon this subject, for her brother and Paul were discussing with animation a theme that had been suggested by a part of the story to which she had just listened. She had often heard mentioned the visit of the Rev. Mr. Holmes of Newport and his companions to Lynn; but as the event had taken place some time before the arrival of Mr. Hathorne's family, all the circumstances had not come to her knowledge.

"It was with clear foresight of this very thing," Paul was saying, "that Mr. Williams wrote and published his work in 1644. 'The Bloody Tenet' was a prediction, fulfilled somewhat sooner, probably, than its author anticipated; for I do not think he dreamed that in only seven years' time Baptists would be cruelly whipped, and a little later Quakers would be hung. I admit that in this case of the persecution of Clarke, Holmes, and Crandall there was some provocation upon their part, but a provocation so slight as not to warrant the punishment inflicted. Had it not been for the spirit of the 'Bloody Tenet' existing in the hearts of the magistrates and ministers of the Bay, a servant of God visiting an old and sick brother, even though he held religious worship at his host's house, would never have been punished."

"If it had been only as you say, there would have been little excuse for the conduct of the government," John replied. "But Clarke was well aware that his presence in the bay would create trouble. He had left the colony, fourteen years before, under circumstances that made his departure little else than a voluntary banishment, and for seven years a law had existed under which he could expect nothing but punishment if he returned. A man of such keen judgment, of intelligence and resolution, ought to have hesitated long before disturbing willfully the peace of a community. I have always suspected, too, that he timed his visit more in reference to political troubles than to the necessities of his sick friend. I confess I may be uncharitable in saying this, but I fear it is the truth."

Paul's face wore a shadow of displeasure.

"I have heard this charge made before," he said, his dark eye flashing, "but I beg you to dismiss such a thought as unworthy of retention. I acknowledge that appearances would support the charge; Coddington was expected daily with his commission from England, and Clarke must have known that by his own persecution in Massachusetts the Baptists at his home would be excited to oppose the ascendency of the man who was plotting to unite the colony of pure, religious liberty with the confederacy that represented oppression and tyranny. But it is only his enemies that charge him with this wickedness, for it is nothing else. I did not know him then, of course, for I was too young to take an interest in such an event or in the actor, though he often visited my father's house; but for the last five years I have known him well, and I believe there could be nothing farther from his heart than to take any part in so disgraceful an action. His character is too eminently Christian for him to consent to such a means of obtaining a political end. But consider the improbabilities that he would do so, even if he could be base enough. His sacred office, his recently acquired position as assistant in the government, the influence he had gained also from his residence in their midst for fourteen years, gave him a prominence in the eyes of his friends that would have given the greatest weight to any opinions he might have expressed. Would he have given up the sure means of personal labor against the opponent of his principles, by meeting him face to face and by urging on his friends to his own support, for the uncertain influence which the action of another colony would have upon the minds of those he wished to move, while he himself was so far distant from them? It is more than improbable."

"I am glad you have removed the unpleasant conviction I had," John returned, candidly; "though I am sorry that my opinions of the action of the magistrates must be changed for the worse. But it still seems to me your friends were wrong to violate the law existing against them, and to take those steps which they knew would exasperate their enemies and disturb the colony."

"I agree with you partially. They might have forborne to preach in Mr. Witter's house, except to him and his family, though I cannot think they were absolutely wrong in doing so, particularly as they took no pains to assemble a congregation and as there were only four or five strangers present at most. But it is evident to me they were right in going to Lynn, for the law of God is higher than the law of man; and if, by its teaching, Mr. Clarke saw it to be his duty to visit his brother, who was sick, aged, and liable to persecution at any moment, and while with him to hold religious services for their mutual comfort and to administer the sacrament, it was but a practical recognition of the superiority of divine over human law."

"You know my sentiments have changed lately in regard to the proceedings of states against individual conscience, and so I cannot approve the arrest made for this cause. But the penalty affixed by the government was not wholly undeserved. The conduct of Clarke in the meeting was such as to provoke the authorities and give them reason to make the punishment severe."

"I have no doubt they were angered," Paul said, smiling a little, "and I am ready to make this excuse for them. But consider the case. Two constables arrested the party, and then, before taking them to prison as common criminals—which they afterward did—for no other purpose, it seems to me than to insult them, they led them to the meeting and forced them to enter. What could they do under such circumstances? By force they were made to partake in a service to which they could lend neither assent nor recognition; and when Clarke, after the close of the exercises, boldly and manfully asserted his dissent and explained truthfully the reason of his presence, he performed a duty which he owed to his conscience and to the principles for which he was called to suffer."

John did not seem disposed to contest the point further, and as they were at that moment summoned to the noonday meal, the subject was dropped. Enough had been said, however, to start a train of thought in Ruth's mind that was to have a great influence upon her future life.

Paul, who acted as the leader of the party, intended to advance a few miles farther and pass the night at a little log-house about a mile from their direct path, where a beautiful sheet of water spread out between the hills and offered facilities to the Indians for spearing fish for their supper. Accordingly, they set out again as soon as the heat became less oppressive, when the sun was within two or three hours of the horizon. At this rate their course would be slow, but Paul was determined to make the journey as much like a pleasure excursion for Ruth as possible.

As they left the chestnuts that had afforded them such grateful shelter from the noonday heat, John rode forward a few paces and fell into conversation with the two men who accompanied the party, and the three Puritans took little heed of the others behind them. Ruth seized the opportunity to ask Paul, who was still at her side, about the event which had formed the subject of conversation between John and himself in the morning. She was glad John was engaged apart from themselves, for she was unwilling to lead the two young men into another discussion, thinking it better that little should be said between them upon questions relating to their different religious beliefs, at least during this journey.

Then Paul told her the story of the persecution of those three men in the year 1651.

CHAPTER VII.

THE STORY OF OBADIAH HOLMES.

HE began by laughingly telling Ruth that he had resolved to shun every attempt to make her or John a proselyte to his own faith, since her father had tacitly trusted his honor in this respect by allowing her to make the journey, and therefore, if he should say anything tending to such a result, she must bear the responsibility. Ruth laughed gayly, the merry sound causing John to turn and smile in sympathy. She said that there was little need of even guarding against such a result. Then as they rode together, each forgetting the company of the others, he spoke, in substance, as follows:

There was a little body of Baptists at Lynn, in 1640, who continued still to reside there after the passage of the law against them, their orderly ways and their avoidance of all efforts to force their views upon public notice gaining some degree of tolerance from the government. One of these Baptists, William Witter by name, an aged man and ill, sent a message to the church in Rhode Island, praying for the visit of some of the brethren, that his old age might not be without the comfort and counsel to be afforded only by those still engaged in the active duties of a Christian life. His request was promptly met by the appointment of three representatives of the church, Messrs Clarke, Holmes, and Crandall. Their hearts full of love and Christian sympathy for the aged man whom they were to visit, the three pursued their journey, hardly thinking of the dangers to which they were subjected, and little expecting to be brought to so much suffering for their deed of love.

Upon their arrival at Mr. Witter's house, about two miles out of the town, as it was Saturday, they arranged to spend the following day in religious worship at their host's dwelling. Accordingly upon the Lord's Day morning Mr. Clarke began the services in the usual manner, four or five of the neighbors, also Baptists, having come together to listen to the words for which they had long patiently waited. The hymn was sung, the Scriptures read and expounded, and the prayer uttered. Then Mr. Clarke rose to preach from the text, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also wilt keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." While illustrating the meaning of the text, the little assembly was suddenly disturbed. The magistrates had received intelligence of the presence of the strangers, and now the officers were at the door to apprehend them. Sorrowfully they submitted and were led away, for what trials they knew not.

With a refinement of insult hardly conceivable, the officers forced their prisoners to accompany them to the meeting-house, where the congregation were assembled at worship. Mr. Clarke and his companions plainly told the constables what would be the necessary result of such a proceeding; but they were deaf to all entreaty or remonstrance, evidently anticipating some action on the part of their prisoners that would be still further offensive. When, therefore, the prisoners entered the house of worship, "as those that *first trusted in Christ*, to be obedient unto him both by word and deed," they declared their dissent from the doctrines of those into whose midst they were forced by voice and gesture. From the meeting they were conducted to the inn where, as Mr. Clarke afterward wrote, they were "watched over night as thieves and robbers," and the next morning were taken before the magistrate and committed to prison.

After a weary imprisonment of two weeks, the court of assistants passed sentence upon them. Mr. Clarke was to pay a fine of twenty pounds, Mr. Holmes of thirty, and Mr. Crandall of five, or be publicly whipped. Neither of the persecuted men would consent, by payment of the fine, to buy himself off from the full measure of suffering which was to be endured for the sake of Christ. They were therefore remanded to prison.

Contrary to the wishes of Mr. Clarke, and without his knowledge, some of his friends paid his fine, and he was soon released. Mr. Crandall, released upon his promise of appearing at the next court, was not notified of the time of its sitting, and his fine was exacted of the keeper of the prison upon his non-appearance. But Mr. Holmes was destined to a worse fate. Detained in prison until September—it was July when he was arrested—the day for his punishment at last came. He still refused to act save in accordance with the dictates of his conscience, and was bidden to prepare himself for his disgrace. In the morning his friends visited him in prison, but to all their offers of refreshment or of stimulants to prepare him for his dreadful ordeal, he turned a deaf ear, fearing lest the cause for which he suffered would be injured if it should be said he was made strong to bear his pain by aught else than the love of Christ in his heart. With prayer and inward communings of the soul with itself and with its Lord, he awaited calmly the appointed hour; and when the keeper's voice was heard in the passage, he took his Testament in his hand and rose to meet him. At the place of execution he stood with undaunted mien and spoke to the people, declaring "the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ" for which he suffered; and when, stripped to the waist and bound to the cruel post, the blows of the three-corded whip fell upon him, cutting the flesh with each stroke so that the red blood ran in streams, he still spoke, saying that though his flesh should fail and his spirit should fail, yet his God would not fail.

"You have struck me as with roses," he said to the executioner when at last he stayed his arm and loosed the bands that held the sufferer to the stake. As he was borne back to prison, two friends came and took him by the hand, and expressed sympathy for his condition; the act was remembered and punished by fines. Mr. Holmes, faint and bleeding, was borne to his cell, where a friend cared for his wounds, while the sufferer soon became insensible from his pain.

In a manuscript written a hundred years

ago by Governor Jenks, he says: "Mr. Holmes was whipt thirty stripes, and in such an unmerciful manner, that in many days, if not some weeks, he could take no rest but as he lay upon his knees and elbows, not able to suffer any part of his body to touch the bed whereon he lay."

We can hardly believe that such an event as this took place in Boston but little more than two centuries ago. With all the enlightment of the present age, with the blessing of religious freedom as firmly in our possession as any of the civil rights guaranteed by government, it is with horror that the darkness of those early days, the depth of error and fanaticism, come to our consideration.

Paul told the story without any attempt to make the naked facts appear more horrible than they naturally would to Ruth's mind. When he had finished the recital they rode on in silence, both feeling the sadness excited by the contemplation of so dreadful a deed. Paul could not help thinking that he might yet be called upon to suffer like pain and disgrace should his duties of the future not be confined to his own colony. Moreover, he already loved the little band of brethren to whose service he had consecrated his life, and it was with inexpressible sorrow that he thought of the fierce persecutions which they were called to endure.

As for Ruth, her soul was filled with horror. Could it be possible that such a deed had been enacted in sight, perhaps, of her own home by the men upon whom she had always looked as leaders in the cause of God's love? Yes. She had forgotten for the moment, so lost had she been in the thought of this one deed, what her own eyes had seen, what groans of anguish her own ears had heard. She shuddered as she thought that her father's hands might have been imbrued in this innocent blood had their arrival been a few years earlier; and her cheek blanched as she reflected that she herself, unwittingly and tacitly it is true, had given her approbation to such a deed by her membership with the church which had performed it. Yet the thought came to her instantly, she must keep her place in its midst, for she did not doubt the truth of its doctrines and the divine sanction of its ordinances.

She was glad when they reached the little hut that was to serve as their shelter for the night, for the preparations for rest recalled her mind from the sad theme upon which it was dwelling. Still, as the little party sat at their evening meal about the shining blaze of the fire and in the quiet of the sombre twilight, the thought of what she had heard would steal in upon her mind, and the sight of the bleeding victim, and of the distant wife and children weeping for the absent father's fate, more than once brought the tears to her eyes. She could not sleep for a long time that night, and when at last her eyelids closed in slumber she dreamed that her father was bleeding beneath the cruel blows before his own door, and awoke with a cry of terror upon her lips.

The next day it was much cooler than it had been, yet with all their endeavors to take advantage of the favorable weather they could only advance about twenty miles; yet they were well satisfied at the progress they had made when they came to encamp at night. The next night they would sleep in Providence, having passed a much shorter time upon the journey than they had anticipated.

The Indians constructed a shelter out of bark and leafy boughs, within which Ruth could be shielded from the dew. The night in the depth of the forest was somewhat chilly, although it was the middle of summer. So, at an early hour, Ruth wrapped herself in a warm cloak, lay down upon the rude couch spread for her, and soon fell asleep. Paul and John sat up much later by the fire, conversing in low tones, the former occasionally singing to himself the words of an old Latin hymn on which he had spent many happy leisure hours, attempting to translate it into English that should preserve at once the spirit and rhythm of the original. John could not have translated the words, though he knew their meaning, for Paul, with whom the grand old hymn was a favorite, had often repeated it in his presence, and had once, at his request, given him a translation. Now the shadowy silence of the night was broken by no sound save the deep voice of the singer, who chanted the verses in a low tone to melodious music which his own correct taste had applied.

After he had ended there was a little pause, when John said to him:

"Paul, I pity your lot, that your convictions of the right must lead you to unite with a down-trodden and persecuted sect. When we were talking yesterday of the sufferings of Mr. Clarke and his companions, I wondered how you could recall such an event with so much calmness; and I tried to place myself in your situation, to think what would be my feelings if I could look into the future and read there for myself either the anguish of an unsatisfied conscience or the certainty, almost, of trouble and persecution. Paul, I respect the manhood that can so rely upon itself; and though I cannot assent to the doctrines of which you are a defender, I believe that in that future rest you will have the sceptre and the crown of a child of God. We are going now to your home, but if you ever have occasion to come again to Boston, remember that you always have my sympathy and friendship. I speak of this now, for this is the last night we may pass together, and I know not how much we shall see each other at Providence."

Paul pressed his friend's hand in silence, while his eyes were filled with grateful tears. He felt peculiarly to-night the need of just such a friendship as this, for he knew not what the morrow might have in its keeping for him. He was going to his home, it was true, but it was a home where no mother's kiss would greet him, where only his father's welcome awaited him—a welcome that he feared might soon be turned into a father's frown, for his son had yet to tell him of the disappointment of his hopes, of the change that had come over the future of both. Paul trembled as he thought that he might be doubly an orphan ere another night should succeed the day, and it was with joy that he now had the assurance again given him that all his earthly friends would not fail him in his trouble.

After a silence of a moment, Paul thanked his friend in tremulous tones, and said:

"The words of the hymn which I sang say there all will be rest and glory, however the troubles of the world may vex us here. There we shall see our everlasting Friend, whom each of us is trying to serve in his own way—the way which he believes is shown to him by God. There may be error here, but the hymn says that all doubt shall there be dissolved, and we can only live here in the hope of that glorious day. Ah, John, what a blessing our faith is! I wonder any one can live without it! It is a marvel to me that I could so long do without its beautiful hopes, its longing desires, its blissful satiety. Oh, my friend, it is a thing to suffer for, it is a thing for which to give up one's life, if the glorious cause require."

The young man had risen to his feet as he spoke, his face glowing with enthusiasm and his black eye kindled with the flame of devout and holy zeal. John was electrified by the deep and powerful feeling manifested by his friend. He arose from the ground and stood by his side; then taking his hand in his own, he said:

"I too, Paul, if my God demands it of me, am ready to follow him to death. Paul, here to-night, beneath these shadowy arches of the vast temple in which we stand, let us dedicate ourselves again to his service, whatever we may find it to be in the future." Then after a little pause, he continued, as he linked his arm in that of his friend and commenced walking back and forth before the fire: "Paul, I am troubled. I would not have her know it," he said, glancing hastily toward Ruth, who still was sleeping sweetly, "but I have thought much of late of the faith you have accepted as your own. I am in the strait of Mr. Mitchell, the minister at Cambridge, who said, after his conversation with President Dunster, that 'unreasonable suggestions' would obtrude themselves upon his thought; but, unlike him, I cannot ascribe them to the devil. Give me your help, Paul. Tell me again the truth as you believe it."

Paul was surprised beyond measure. Could it be that so great a blessing was in store for him? Was this young man, so eager for the right, so strong in spirit, no longer to be arrayed against his persecuted brethren, but to become a defender of their faith? He hardly dared to hope it; still he was not deceived; John was asking him again for the truth of the word of God. Paul sat down by the fire, and taking a Testament from his pocket, he began to read some passages to his companion.

After he had read several parts of the Gospels which relate particularly to that doctrine of the Baptists which had given them their name, he closed the book and turned to his friend with the simplest but best argument for the faith upon his lips.

"I can add nothing," he said; "the truths that I have read to you are those on which I found my belief, and it is to these truths, unsupported by any other evidence than that the word of God is true, unaided by subtile argument or profound logic, that I am willing to entrust the faith I have accepted as my own. The waves of opposition may roll and dash against it from your councils, but I fear not the security of the word. Human reason can not touch this truth. It is solely the possession of divine revelation; it is a law from which, to my mind, there is no appeal, and the decree of synods, even the usages of antiquity, can in no way affect its authority. I have determined, John, through all my course to rely upon this argument alone for the support of my faith, for it is impregnable."

"Is this all, then, that you have to urge?" John asked, with a shade of disappointment upon his face.

"This is enough," Paul answered, gazing earnestly upon his companion's face. "Others would undoubtedly press other claims. I suppose President Dunster must have canvassed all the ground to have made such a man as Mr. Mitchell admit as much as you have mentioned he did. But I am willing to leave my cause with you, relying for its support solely upon the truth of the Bible—solely upon the foundation God himself has given it."

"But I am not sure that the original is correctly translated in these instances."

"You are willing to accept the translation for other parts of the Bible. I only ask you to accept this as candidly, though it opposes your opinions. Besides this, the validity of the translation is questioned by very few scholars. It is not upon this point that the arguments of your church are founded, at least the arguments most worthy of consideration. It is freely admitted by many of your best representatives that infant baptism has not the authority of the Scriptures, but they found their belief in it upon ancient custom, upon church history, as they say. Even admitting that they have the authority of the ancient church—which, I think, is far from being true—you will agree with me upon deliberation that the ground will not bear comparison with the Scriptures. This *one* of our doctrines is strong enough in the great authority we claim for it, and we have no fear that the worth of that authority will ever fail."

"But this is only one of the points in which you differ from us," said John.

"Another is what you have already accepted: Freedom of conscience and the separation of Church and State. Besides this, and the doctrine that the immersion of believers is the only baptism of the New Testament, we hold that the sacraments are inoperative without faith, and that conversion alone can entitle one to membership. These are the most important principles of the Baptist faith."

The young Puritan sat in silence, his head resting upon his hand, engaged in deep thought. He cared not now for a support of these doctrines; the mere enunciation of them was enough to occupy his mind with attendant thoughts and rivet his attention in their study. He had never before known so clearly what the tenets of this persecuted people were; the doctrine of baptism by immersion and the denial of infant baptism were points in the Baptist creed which were particularly distasteful to the Puritan mind, and these other articles of faith were generally but little considered; it was enough for the intolerant spirit of the times that the sect was polluted by one stain of heresy, and this stain was black enough to throw all others into the shade. It was for the first time, then, that John Hathorne now thought of these doctrines, which have been, since those early days, the cherished belief of so many of God's children. As he looked upon them and pondered them now, he was surprised that he found so little in them that was really contrary to his own views. He saw that they were greatly at variance with the teachings of his own church, but of late he had learned not to trust so implicitly to the truth of those teachings, for he had found his personal experience taking him beyond their reach in some instances.

One of his most cherished recollections was of the time when a great change had taken place in his life, when religion had suddenly assumed a new aspect to him and when his soul had received a new blessing, as he always termed the peaceful love of God and Christ that filled it with joy unspeakable. Now he asked himself whether this was the conversion upon which the Baptists placed so much stress. He had loved God before this change, he thought; but his heart told him that there was a new, a better, a holier love dwelling in it now—a love recognizing as its origin the bleeding heart of the Saviour of men. Yes! there had been a change, a *conversion*—something of more value to him than any other event of his life; and if it was this upon which the Baptists founded the right to church membership, he must believe with them. This was the *new birth* of the third chapter of John. This it was to believe; but to "believe and be baptized," ah! he was not yet ready for that. When the question advanced to this point, the old, old objection came up: How could so many great and good men be mistaken in a practice of centuries? Surely he could not go astray if he followed in the footsteps of his fathers! He lifted his eyes, as he thought, and they fell upon the form of their native guide; instantly the old, old objection was met and answered for ever; the savages of the forest, for generations he knew not how many, had followed in the footsteps of their ancestors, but their ways were only ways of black darkness and error

"The sacraments inoperative without faith." He found himself repeating the words over and over again. What did they mean, except that the institution of the church was not for the fostering of sin? that the protection of its fold was only for the believers in Christ? that the broken body of the Saviour was given for the nourishment of those that received him, that had faith in his atonement?

Far into the night the young man sat by the fire and communed with his thoughts. The flames died away, and the smouldering embers emitted now and then a faint flash of light, that shone dimly upon his face. Paul had long since wrapped himself in his cloak and thrown himself down to sleep. The young Puritan was alone, and the silent grandeur of the forest solitude began to awe his soul. Imperceptibly at first his thoughts began to be recalled from the attentive study to which they had been devoted; the fire was too low for the emission of heat, and a chilly sense of loneliness made the silence oppressive. He made an effort still to follow out the train of thought which he had been last pursuing, but his attention had become averted, the terrible silence still forced itself upon his mind, and he found the attempt vain.

Perhaps that mysterious influence so often exerted upon the mind by which sleep can be broken by the mere presence of a person standing over the slumberer—by which, too, the thoughts are directed to a friend who has been absent many months but the next moment speaks in our presence—may have caused his temporary uneasiness. He was just about to rise and retire to the shelter provided for him, when a low whisper startled him. It came from the guide, who was lying upon the ground a few feet from where he was sitting. He had thought the Indian was asleep, but now the words came directly to John's ear:

"Go! Be still; lie down and make sleep! Solomon watch!"

John had presence of mind enough to follow out the Indian's instructions with manifest composure, and in a few minutes was, to all appearance, in a sound sleep.

CHAPTER X.

THE TREACHEROUS ATTACK.

FOR nearly an hour all was still, while John Hathorne lay quietly in a feigned slumber, all his nerves upon the stretch to catch the first signs of the approaching danger. He began to think the Indian must have been mistaken in his fears—at the time there were no hostilities between the natives and the colonists—and was somewhat at a loss to account for Solomon's sudden alarm. The only thing that occurred to him as in any way possible was the approach of some one of the small bands of Indians, marauders, hardly belonging to any tribes, which at very rare intervals had been known to attack travelers for the sake of booty or ransom of the captives that might be taken.

Neither John nor Paul had noticed the absence of the Indians of the party early in the evening, so engaged had they been with their conversation. But though they were unaware of the threatened danger, they had a trusty guard in the person of their native guide. He did not allow it to escape him that the other two Indians stole away into the forest after the encampment had been arranged for the night. His keen eye had seen reason for distrusting them through all the second day of the journey, and now he followed their trail with stealthy footsteps, darting from one cover to another and just keeping their dusky forms in view as they glided away into the depths of the forest. Thus he followed them for nearly two miles, when suddenly a light gleamed through the openings of the woods and the objects of his pursuit stood in the presence of a band of eight stalwart Indians. Then creeping with noiseless tread near to the council-fire, he listened to the traitors' plans. They were to attack the party that night and in the confusion that would ensue rob them of what little baggage they carried. The two traitors were to set fire to the halfenclosed hut where Ruth was sleeping, and then, under the pretext of taking her to a place of safety, were to bear her away to a secure haunt to be retained until a large ransom should be paid. The plan was well laid; the two would return at once and lie down to sleep at a seasonable hour, and be ready for the approach of their companions at an advanced hour of the night.

Solomon learned it all, and his own experience taught him all that must be known in addition, and he hoped to be able to destroy their hopes and keep his little party unharmed, though his foes were more than twice the number of his own force. He sped back to his place by the camp-fire with only time enough to assume a position of negligent ease before the return of the two Indians. When he uttered his whispered warning to John, he was so near him that there was no possibility of the treacherous red-skins hearing his voice, for contrary to the usual custom they had thrown themselves down for their feigned slumber at a little distance from the guide and the party, though still near enough not to excite suspicion. All had their weapons where they could seize them at an instant's warning, so that the carefully arranged arms of the two hostile Indians and of Solomon could have awakened no mutual distrust.

For nearly an hour all was still in the forest. Then John caught the note of a distant whip-poor-will. Soon it was repeated, and a few minutes after he heard it again, a little nearer. So this strange whip-poor-will continued slowly to approach, until its note was quite near and loud enough to draw the attention even of one who had not been listening for it.

John had felt the time had come, for what he knew not. The bird hushed its signal note. All was perfect stillness. His eyes half closed, John lay in almost breathless suspense, his lips compressed, his heart beating quickly and a cold chill of fear running through his frame. Yet the young Puritan was brave. The coward is he only who yields to his fear; the hero trembles in the presence of danger, but still shrinks not from the performance of his duty.

He had not long to wait. The sharp report of a musket reverberated through the forest arches. In an instant all were aroused and upon their feet, arms in hand. John called to his companions to keep close to the guide and obey him in everything, and then, saying one word of encouragement to Ruth as he passed by, he rushed to the aid of Solomon and the two Puritan guards, who were surrounded by more than double their number, and who had as much as they could do to defend themselves with their pikes and swords. The contest was so close and the attacks of the red-skins so vigorous that the smaller firearms could not be used, and John and Paul could not have recourse to these weapons nor to the muskets for fear of wounding their friends.

The impetuous rush of John and Paul for an instant bore back the assailants, and two or three of the Indians darted to the cover of neighboring trees; but Solomon had closed with one of his foes, and they were locked in a struggle for life, each trying to prevent his adversary from drawing the keen knife from his belt. Paul's quick eye detected the gleam of a blade behind a tree which the two combatants were rapidly nearing in their struggle. Leaving John and two soldiers to cope with the three or four opposing them, he sprang to Solomon's relief; but no sooner was this movement observed than the sharp report of a musket sounded on the air and a ball whizzed past his ear, fired by one of the red-skins from the cover he had sought. Undeterred, Paul raised his sword to thrust the guide's antagonist through; the blade descended, but with uncertain aim, for a quick, sudden sting unnerved his arm, and he only succeeded in giving the savage a wound upon the shoulder. This was enough, however, to give Solomon a little the advantage and to allow him time to see that Paul was at his side.

"Back! back!" he cried, with a gesture of alarm. "Ladee! Care ladee! Solomon kill these Injin man!"

Paul comprehended in an instant the guide's fears. He turned to hasten to Ruth, whose safety he had taken for granted if the fierce attack of the enemy could be frustrated. But now as he turned to retrace his steps his heart sickened within him, for suddenly a bright light leaped up from the little lodge where he had left her, and in the glow he saw two dusky forms spring into the doorway and seize upon the maiden. He leaped forward, but he was stayed in his course. Two savages threw themselves in his path with their empty muskets clubbed and raised above him. His first impulse upon seeing the Indians in the lodge was to draw a pistol from his belt, though he could not fire before the Indians seized upon Ruth. The weapon was still in his hand, and instantly a bullet pierced the heart of the red-skin nearest him. Still he had more than a match in the other savage. A gleam of triumph flashed across the stern features of his foe, as his raised musket descended with a murderous blow; but Paul's raised sword broke the force of the shock, the faithful weapon falling to the ground, shattered to pieces. Still he did not escape wholly, for the heavy stock fell upon his right shoulder, striking him to the earth. His head swam as he sank down, and the last thing he remembered to have seen was the poor maiden still struggling with her captors amid the dancing flames. Then all was dark.

The savage drew the glittering knife from his belt and stooped over the young man's prostrate form. He turned the body over on its face, but before his dreadful purpose could be accomplished he fell backward with a bullet through his brain. John raised his friend and supported his head upon his hand, and as Paul opened his eyes he told him that the fight was over and the Indians fled.

"There goes the last of the rascals"—John's face was turned away from the burning lodge—"and they've had enough of their bargain. Three dead, and as many pretty badly used, though they have managed to get away. They found us better prepared than they expected."

Paul started quickly from his friend's support and sprang to his feet. "Ruth!" he cried. "Where is she?" and then without waiting for an answer, he staggered away toward the spot where he had last seen her, struggling in the hands of the savages.

John sprang quickly with a cry of pain and terror, and followed him. It had been but a half minute since he had put his own antagonist to flight and sped to the rescue of Paul, and not an instant had he had for thought. The bright light of the flames had sprung up while his every energy was upon the strain in defence of his own life, and it had escaped him that it was the lodge that was burning. Indeed, all that we have related took place in so short a time, only a few minutes, and the danger of each combatant was so great, that no one of the party, save the guide, had any regard to the things outside of his own vicinity. Everything had been done by instinct, upon mere impulse; and indeed, had any one thought of Ruth, nothing could have been done; the assailants were too many, and as in Paul's case the attempt would have been vain.

But now all were roused to a sense of the danger they had neglected—the greatest danger of all. The ruins of the little lodge were still burning, throwing a faint light over the place of their encampment, but the maiden for whom the shelter had been made was nowhere to be found.

CHAPTER XI.

THE RESCUE OF RUTH.

PAUL only advanced a few paces, and then fell heavily to the earth; his eager feet refused their office, a dizziness came over him, and he felt with inexpressible pain that he could not join in the efforts made for Ruth's recovery. The others pressed on and left him. He saw them pause by the burning embers at a little distance from him, and after a hurried consultation commence searching, in a large semicircle behind the spot where the lodge had been, for traces of the flight of the missing one and her captors. As the little party of three held this hasty conference it struck Paul for the first time that Solomon was nowhere to be seen; the dead Indians lay where they had fallen, the savage with whom the guide had been engaged lying farthest from Paul, but still near enough for him to recognize the body; the guide had not been killed, then, in the struggle, and Paul gathered some hope from his absence, for he knew that it could not be without purpose.

John and the two soldiers were not long in finding the traces they sought. A piece of the fringe of Ruth's dress was found clinging to a thorny bush, and a little farther into the forest the light of the flaming pine knots, which they used as torches, revealed a light gray glove, dropped upon the ground. Now the pursuers would find but little difficulty in tracking the Indians, and perhaps overtaking them before they had borne their captive far away. They returned to Paul, to leave him as comfortably and safely situated as possible and to seek for the guide. But as Paul assured them that Solomon must be already in pursuit of Ruth's captors, they waited only to place him at the foot of a huge oak, propped up by blankets and wrapped in his cloak, with his loaded weapons within reach of his hand, and then left him to follow the trail. Paul saw them disappear with a feeling of loneliness and almost vexation. It was by no means pleasant to be the only one left upon a deserted battle-field, with the consciousness that the enemy might return to carry away their dead comrades, while his wounded shoulder very sensibly reminded him that his right arm would be of little use, should he have to contend again for his life. But it was not on this account that he was most troubled; it was with bitter vexation that he saw the others depart on an errand in which he would gladly have taken part, in which he felt he ought to have, if not by right at least by inclination, the first place. In the few hours during which he was left alone with his own misgivings, he came to a more thorough knowledge of himself and his feelings. It was vain for him to try to convince himself that Ruth was not in any danger in the hands of the savages; that all that was to be feared would be the effects of her own terror; that the Indians only wished to obtain a large ransom for her. His heart was not so easily to be quieted. Paul loved Ruth; he loved her as he had never known until this night; but now the whole force of his passion became manifest to him as he sat in the darkness, trying to calm his mind enough to implore the divine Power to save her from her danger.

But we must follow Ruth and her captors.

Awakened in excessive terror, she could do but little besides watch with all anxiety the defence her friends were making after they had rushed to the encounter. She stood beneath the low roof, intent only on the danger threatened from before, from the band of savages which had made the open attack. It was without any suspicion on her part, therefore, that the two traitors approached their victim from the shades in the rear of the lodge. She saw not the flickering light of the fire-brands with which they ignited the dry twigs and boughs of which the little shelter was made, and before she could cry out or flee from so unexpected a danger she was standing in the midst of crackling flames.

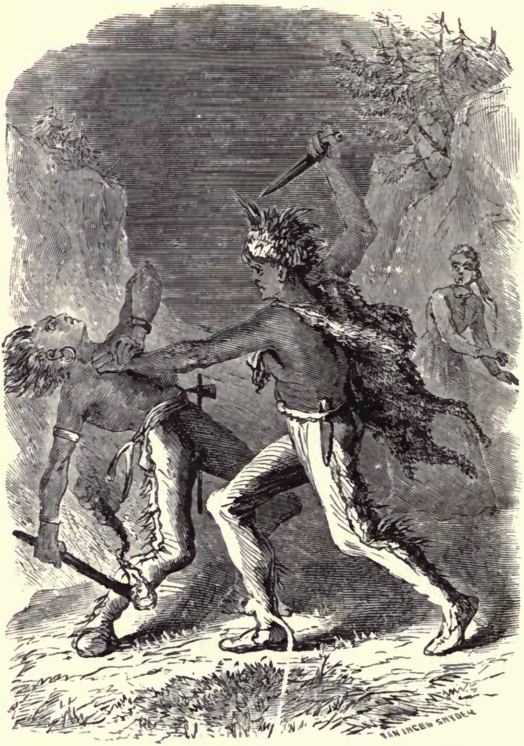
Immediately one of the Indians called her to rush from the danger and he would place her in safety; but it was no easy matter to obey this warning. Her terror made her powerless, and her strength failed her, as she started to leap forward through the flames; at the instant the two savages sprang in and drawing her hands behind her with a grip of steel, dragged her hastily and rudely forth into the forest. She could not call or cry out; her mouth was parched; she understood now the whole position of affairs, and saw herself in the hands of savages, doomed perhaps to a long captivity. She was hurried away between her captors, their sinewy arms almost lifting her from the ground. Her thoughts did not desert her, however; and bravely she resorted to the only means that occurred to her ready wit by which she could help herself. They had gone but a few steps when she managed to drop one of her riding gloves without attracting the notice of her captors, and a little farther on the veil, that she had tucked into her belt upon the close of the day's journey, floated away behind her as she was hurried onward through the darkness. It was with little hope that she took these precautions, and she little knew that her deliverance would depend entirely upon these careful acts of presence of mind.

With the greatest possible speed the Indians pursued their way toward the spot where the band had been encamped before the attack. After proceeding nearly a mile, they ventured to light a pine torch, which one of them carried in advance, while the other followed with Ruth. Their course was now more rapid, and they soon emerged into the little open space where the savages had been encamped during the early part of the night. Stopping only for a few minutes to give Ruth a little rest and recruit her strength for the remainder of their flight, they pressed on again into the forest; but they had delayed long enough to leave a trace of their presence. Ruth had crouched by the few embers of the dying fire, half reclining on the ground to regain the strength she so much needed, and one of her captors, thinking her cold in the chilly dampness of the night, raked the smouldering fire together and roused the dormant flame. Had he known that the pursuer was already near, he would not have been guilty of such an indiscretion.

Away through the forest solitudes, over stones and through briers, they dragged the almost fainting maiden. She could not speak and implore the mercy of the savages, for a leathern band had been placed over her mouth when they had stopped early in the march to light the torch.

Suddenly the light of the torch was thrown back from a bare wall of rock, rising almost perpendicularly for twenty or thirty feet, and crowned upon the summit with a dark mass of shrubbery, embracing the rising trunks of hemlock trees. Beneath this cliff they held their way, and turning suddenly around its curving base, came upon a little pathway leading up the steep. Ruth felt that this was the end of their journey, that this forest fastness was to be her prison, and overcome by weariness and her utter hopelessness, she sank heavily to the earth. Her captors bent over her to raise her in their arms and bear her up the pathway, but a quick, low sound made them pause for an instant. Again it came, nearer than before; and they knew the pursuer was close upon them. More than this, they knew with what a foe they would have to deal, for the noise was not loud enough to be made by a white man's foot; it could only be by the moccasined foot of a native of the woods. Rudely and hastily they seized their burden and sprang up the steep pathway, but they were too late.

Solomon had no sooner rid himself of his antagonist than his quick eye had taken in all the situation. Instantly he flew to the rescue of John, who was bravely contending with two powerful red-skins, and who must soon have fallen beneath their united efforts. Then the blaze of the burning lodge forced itself upon his notice, occupied as he already was with his active foe, and he redoubled his exertion, fighting with despairing energy. It would have been death for him had he turned to the defence of Ruth, but as he fought he marked the spot where her captors entered the forest, and when his foe had watched his opportunity and turned to fly, he no longer sought his life, but leaped forward to the pursuit as eagerly as the hound set free from the leash springs onward to the chase. He found the traces of their flight—the fringe, the glove, the veil—and seeing instantly the direction of their path, he pressed on at all his speed to the camp he had visited once before that night. Here the flames were still burning feebly, and one glance at the embers was enough to convince him that they had been recently disturbed. But he was now at fault, though certain that those whom he was seeking had been there but a little while before. He searched the vicinity of the point directly opposite that at which he had entered the little open space, but he found no trace of the fugitives, and he was loth to keep on with no sign to guide him. He knew of the cliff to which they had really gone, but it was in a direction nearly at right angles to their former course, and he thought they would hardly lose time by not proceeding directly thither. But in searching a little in that direction he found at last what he sought, for the briers had not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only been an injury to the poor girl, but now held up to her deliverer the tokens they had so rudely wrested from her. The impatient guide needed nothing more, but sped away to the rescue.

He reached the cliff just as the savages bore their helpless burden up the steep. His foot no longer trampled in its haste the crackling twigs; silently, like a very ghost of vengeance, nay! of recurring retribution, he sprang up the pathway in the footsteps of his victims. The glittering knife flashed for an instant in the air and then was buried in the heart of one of the savages; the other turned upon him for a minute and then glided swiftly away into the forest.

Solomon raised the slight form from the ground and bore it away in his arms. He dared not delay for rest, nor could he follow the same path in returning which he had kept in the pursuit. Striking boldly into the woods in a straight line for the place of encampment, he hurried away into the darkness.

It was some time before Ruth regained her consciousness, and not until she was far away from the haunt that would have been her prison did she open her eyes and recognize her deliverer. The first gray light of morning was peeping through the leafy arches as the Indian halted for rest and placed his burden upon a soft bed of moss beside a spring of water. He smiled as she asked him how he had found her and overcome her captors, and in his brief, abrupt way he told her of the rescue. And when the tears of gratitude filled her eyes as she called him her dear, dear friend, the stalwart Indian became uneasy, anxious to be upon the road again, and Ruth laughingly arose to spare him his honest confusion. Taking her again in his strong arms, for she was still as weak as a child, the guide hastened onward, and reached the camp as the sun rose up from the horizon and gilded the tree-tops with his golden-red rays. A cry of welcome greeted them as they entered the camp. John and his companions had returned before dawn, discouraged and almost hopeless, and they had been but little cheered by the intense anxiety that was manifest in every act and word of Paul.

They had all agreed that their only hope lay in the absent guide. Whether he was at work for the rescue of Ruth, or whether he was only engaged in the pursuit of the savages, that they might not escape without severe punishment, they could not tell. One of the soldiers suggested that the guide too had played them false, but neither John nor Paul would for a moment entertain the thought; they knew the man too well.

But when Solomon strode into the camp bearing the rescued maiden in his arms as he would have carried a little child, they were not prepared for so speedy a return, and the Indian was fain to escape the united expressions of gratitude that were heaped upon him, pleading his need of rest and stretching himself out for a short sleep beneath a close cluster of tall bushes.

CHAPTER XII.

ARRIVAL AT ROGER WILLIAMS'.

IT was past noon when the little company entered the town in which their journey was to end, and passed through its quiet streets to the bank of the beautiful river where stood the dwelling of Master Jacob Wallingford. Paul would hear of no other plan than that all should proceed at once to his home, to gain rest and refreshment before Ruth and John should present themselves before their friends. The master of the house received them joyfully, greeting them as his son's friends and expressing without disguise the satisfaction he felt at having them beneath his roof. As for John and Ruth, they were much gratified at receiving so warm a welcome—the more so because Master Wallingford's manner was so much more unreserved than that to which they had always been accustomed. His welcome was free from that constrained, that *Puritan* manner, which said so plainly that not even reasonable joys—the pleasure of hospitality, of friendship, of brotherly love—were to be allowed the control of the mind for an instant.

Mr. Wallingford, probably from his want of sympathy with the strict Puritans in their religious views, had gone even to the other extreme, if the word may be used in speaking of the easy manners of any one of that day.

With the easy air of one in possession of abundant wealth, half inviting, half expecting his request to be regarded as a command, he received his guests and conducted them into his spacious dwelling. His son he greeted with marked affection, devoting as much attention to him as his courtesy to his guests would admit, asking particularly of all that had occurred since the time of the last letter Paul had sent home. He did not notice for a little time that the young man appeared weak and ill, but finally, when a chance word dropped by John brought it to his attention, he became deeply anxious, and as soon as his fears were sufficiently allayed by the light way in which Paul spoke of his injury, he flew off in a fierce denunciation of the whole Indian race, expressing his utter hatred of the whole family and wishing that he might never see one of the red-skins again. His indignation was not modified when he learned that Ruth too had suffered at their hands, and his anger was really getting the better of his reason and surpassing the bounds of common politeness to his guests, when a ridiculous light was cast upon the whole matter by Paul, who suggested to his father that his trading operations depended somewhat upon the Indians, and it would be inconvenient to have them annihilated at once. Mr. Wallingford laughed good humoredly, and devoted his attentions to the refreshment of the wearied travelers.

It was not till late in the day that John and Ruth departed for the house of their friend, Master Roger Williams. Paul promised to see them on the following day, and they left him to reveal to his father the change that had come upon his prospects, and a feeling of sadness occupied their hearts as they saw the first great storm-cloud of their friend's life rising into view and already casting its sombre shadow upon him. Paul knew their thoughts and was glad of their heartfelt sympathy; and though he felt that he should not see them again till his parent's frown had fallen upon him, a smile rested upon his face as he bade them farewell and turned back into the house. So may the radiance of the upright soul expel from the Christian's face all trace of doubt or gloom in the hour of deepest trial!

The clattering of the horses' hoofs brought to the window of the pleasant family-room of Mr. Williams' dwelling the eager faces of three children, who returned to their mother's inquiry the answer that two strangers were alighting at the door.

"It must be our friends! It is John and Ruth!" exclaimed the good woman, and the next moment her voice was heard in the hall giving a warm welcome to the young people as they entered.

"Praise the Lord our fears were vain!" she said, devoutly. "A rumor reached us at noon that a party had been attacked by the Indians, and that many had been killed. Father said that God would have you in his hand, and that our hearts must not be troubled. But it is sometimes hard, dear children, to do just as we ought, and even father himself was at last so anxious that he went out to make inquiries of some of the people. We were not sure of your coming, but we feared you were of the party. But God hath brought you to us in safety. My children, may his blessing be with you!"

She began helping Ruth to lay aside her outer garments, after leading the way to the room where she had been sitting. John went with one of the children to see that the horses were properly cared for, and to give some directions to the two soldiers who had accompanied them on the journey. The two guests felt perfectly at home, though they had not seen their hosts for some years, for the smile of welcome that had rested on the face of Mrs. Williams when she had first greeted them was so kind and loving and motherly that they almost felt they had only returned to another parent, whose warm heart would cherish them as her own.

John had returned, and they had been sitting for nearly an hour talking together of all that had occurred since their visit long ago, while Ruth was a child, when footsteps were heard at the door, and Mrs. Williams announced the return of her husband. Ruth started quickly from her chair as she heard a well-remembered voice in conversation with Mr. Williams in the hall, but she as quickly drew back and restrained her desire to run and throw her arms about the neck of her friend Mary, for Mr. Williams, the great Mr. Williams—he for whom she had conceived a reverence amounting almost to awe—would be the witness of their meeting. She sank abashed into her chair, and in another moment the great man was before her.

He had greatly changed since she had last seen him. As she remembered him he had a full, genial face, his hair and beard just streaked with gray, his eyes bright and piercing, and his lips firm, and hardly ever relaxing into the benevolent smile that so well became them. But now the glory of years had been added to him. His step had lost somewhat of its lightness; his form was a trifle bent; his long hair was of a snowy whiteness, and he had now no beard to hide his finely-turned chin or obscure the bright smile that sat so often on his lips. It was evident that his great labors, involving often the necessity of exposure and want, had performed their work in weakening his physical powers and undermining his strong constitution, but at the same time each year had given additional sweetness to a character always lovely; and as the soul had grown more beautiful, putting on a nobler form with the passing time, so the outward man had gained that serenity of aspect which is the glory of a life advanced in years.

Ruth almost trembled as the good man greeted her brother, cordially offering him all the great hospitality of his home and inquiring affectionately after all those who had been left in Boston; but when he turned to her and took her hand in his, and, with his other hand resting upon her head as he looked down into her upturned face, asked if that was the Ruth, the little Ruth Hathorne who had crept into his heart so long before, she found that the great Mr. Williams, of whom she had heard so much that she had come to fear her meeting with him, had, after all, as tender a heart as his gentle daughter Mary, and one in which she would find almost as much love for herself. The warm tears of gratitude filled her dark eyes as he spoke, and when he released her hand she was very glad to turn away to Mary's embrace and hide them in the bosom of her friend.

There were so many things to be said, so many messages from the loved ones at home to be given, that it was somewhat later than usual when the Bible was brought from its shelf and placed at the good man's side. Ruth found herself wondering, at the close of the simple service, what could be the charm in the voice and manner of him who had conducted it, to make the familiar words so far more beautiful than they had ever seemed before, and to inspire within her soul a deeper feeling of love for the great Master; and she often thought afterward of the effect produced upon her on this first evening, knowing then that it was not the influence of voice or manner, but the purity of the reader's soul shining beyond his outward form, as he pondered the divine words, and exerting its calm power upon all who heard.

It was a joy merely to look on the good man's face, its expression was so benign, it was so lighted up by the love of his heart for God and all of his creatures. Ruth could not have entertained any feeling of fear, of unpleasant restraint, in his presence, however much she might have reverenced him. To see him was to love him, and it made little difference whether the honored of the land or the poor, simple, half-naked savage came to him for friendship or service; every one found a warm place in his heart. It may well be imagined, then, how easily a tempera ment like Ruth's would yield to such a power, and we can almost see the bright smiles of love and joy that lighted up her beautiful face whenever the good man laid his hand on her head, as he would often do, and say some happy word to her.

Ruth found her waist encircled by the arm of her friend Mary when the little band began to separate for their rest, and she was glad to be led away to share her companion's bed. Though two hundred years have passed away since the date of our story, the nature of young girls has not changed; so, of course, Ruth and Mary lay awake more than half the night talking of that numberless multitude of subjects which the feminine mind alone can conjure up. Perhaps their talk was on topics a little different from those that would now be chosen by equals in age, for those were not the days so much of dress and fashion as of sterner customs; and it should be remembered also that Mary was the elder of the two by a dozen years, yet they had enough sympathies in common to keep them busily employed for many hours after the eyes of the wearied traveler should have been closed in sleep, and as a natural consequence it was but little refreshed they were when the morning dawned and the early day of the New England household was begun.

It was nearly noon, and Ruth had stolen away to her room for a little while that she might lie down and rest, when she heard Paul Wallingford's voice in the hall inquiring for her. She hastened immediately to see him, for John was away, and she too well divined the object of Paul's visit to allow him to depart without its accomplishment.

The young man met her at the foot of the stairs, and Ruth read in his saddened brow and sorrowful eye the confirmation of her fears. Paul held her hand for a moment without speaking, and in silence they passed into the room and sat down.

" It is as we feared, Ruth," he said at last. " As I told you, I knew my father too well to be mistaken. The blow was too great, too sudden, the destruction of his life-long hopes too complete, for any way of reconciliation to be left."

"Is there none? Can a father become so estranged from his son in a moment that there can be no hope of change?"

"Ah, Ruth, I would not have believed it myself, and even when I told you my fears there was still a little doubt in my mind that he would go so far. But it is worse even than I had expected at the uttermost. I have seen his hasty temper excited before, but never till now have I seen him so determined. Had he given way to an outburst of passion I should augur better for the future, but he was even calm, his voice only betraying the depth of his feeling. His words were measured and slow, too carefully weighed to be lightly retracted; and though they were not those that I expected to hear from his lips, their burning significance will ever be the more painful in my remembrance. It was with scorn that he spoke of his son, the heir to his wealth, who had only returned to blast his hopes and to leave him for his enemies, or perhaps to remain an inmate of his house while in reality an outcast from his heart. It was hard to hear him speak thus, and harder still to listen to his cruel taunts, that I had come back to seek my inheritance, that it was not his love I prized, but only the results of his labors, and that of course the sooner my ingratitude completed its work upon him, the better it would be for me; but it was hardest of all when he turned from me to my Master, and calmly, with deliberate forethought, gave utterance to words that I cannot, I must not, recall. That was too hard to bear, and I turned from him and left him alone. I saw him this morning. The cold sneer rested still on his face when he saw that I was still beneath his roof, but without any farther word he went away. Of course I am decided what to do. Though he has not banished me his presence in so many words, I am still, as he said, an outcast from his heart; and if I can have no home there, his dwelling cannot be mine. It has come to pass as we feared, Ruth, but with the accompaniment of more terrible memories for the future than I had thought."

He leaned his head upon his hand, and after a little silence said slowly:

"No mother and no father, brotherless and sisterless, my friends every day dropping away from me, I go out into the world. If I live, there will be few to care for me; if I die, there will be few to mourn my loss. It is harder to be friendless, Ruth, than I thought it would be."

"Not wholly friendless, Paul," Ruth answered, laying her hand on his appealingly. "Remember, the few that are left are firm and true, and you have yet life before you in which to win others."

"A life that persecution may cut short, or so embitter that it can hardly be called life."

"If it should be your lot to suffer as others have suffered, remember what the eternal Friend, the Elder Brother, has said: 'He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.' And his blessed lips also uttered the words: 'Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.'"

So she comforted him.

CHAPTER XIII.

PAUL EXPLAINS HIS PLANS.

SOME days passed away before Ruth again saw Paul, but then he came to her with a face no longer clouded over by the shadow of sorrow and regret, but radiant with happiness, and telling plainly to the beholder that every hesitation, every longing, backward look was passed away for ever, and that the joyous soul was ready for the contest that might be before it. He came to her with a light step as she sat upon her horse in front of the house waiting for John to mount; and he laid his hand upon the gathered reins, as if desiring to retain her while he talked. He had been staying at the house of a friend since he last saw her, and in the interval had made arrangements with which he desired Ruth and her brother to be acquainted. It was now Tuesday, and on the following Sunday he was to be baptized by the pastor of the Baptist church, and was to unite with that body. He had also concluded arrangements to study a few months with Mr. Williams, that he might be benefited by his great experience with the Indians, and get enough knowledge of their language to be able to act in the capacity of a missionary. He was full of hopes for the future, full of his burning desire to be at work in his chosen calling. There was now no mention made of the father who had rejected him or of the friends who had cast him off. All of the future that was not bright with sunshine he was determined to shut out from his present sight; all the darkness of the past he was resolved to forget, save as it should serve to make his work still more glorious in his eyes and nerve him to its better fulfillment.

It was only for a few minutes they could talk together, and Paul was obliged to say good-bye when John came from the house and mounted his horse. A little feeling of sadness crept into his heart as he stood alone and saw the brother and sister ride away together—a feeling not of envy at their mutual love and happiness, for he would not have deprived them of it for the world, but of loneliness, of inexpressible regret that his lot was so very different from that of his friends; but he turned away with a resolute step and steeled his mind to think of other things.

As he passed out into the street and turned away to go to his home, he met the Indian guide. Solomon was on his way to the house of Mr. Williams, where he expected to see the good man, but as Paul told him that he was away from home, he turned and accompanied him for some distance, as the way of both led them toward the river. Paul was glad to meet him, for he had already formed a plan in which Solomon was to bear a part, if he could be persuaded to help him. Solomon listened attentively as Paul laid before him the work that was to occupy his own attention in the future, and he expressed his joy that his fellows were to be taught the blessed truths which he had learned to love and to trust so implicitly. But when Paul began to speak of help, and of help that an Indian alone could give, Solomon began to grow a little disturbed. It was not that he was unwilling to work, and to work in this way, but Paul proposed to begin with his own tribe, and he distrusted his own ability to gain the respect and attention of those who had been so long estranged from him.

Paul did not succeed in convincing him before they reached the water's edge. Then at the Indian's solicitation he embarked with him in his canoe, and they shot out upon the clear surface of the stream. After they reached the open river and felt the force of the current, Solomon allowed the little craft to float pretty much at its own will, and they continued their conversation.

The idea was so wholly new to the Indian that it was only with the greatest difficulty he could be made to believe that he could be of assistance to Paul in his great work. The late afternoon gave place to early evening before they turned their course again up stream, but ere they reached the shore and Paul stepped from the canoe upon the beach, he had prevailed on his companion to act as his colleague in his mission, though the Indian was still distrustful of any success in his efforts.

Paul walked away thoughtfully to the house of the friend who had offered him a home, and in his little room gave himself up to the crowding thoughts of the hour. He was troubled no longer about questions relating to his future work; they were all settled now, and he was all ready for active labor. He had long been decided too on the subject of his approaching baptism. The hour was now near, and his heart was filled with joy at the hope of following in the footsteps of his Master, yet he had so long looked forward to the event that it did not occupy all of his thoughts. There were other thoughts and feelings now craving his attention. Since those terrible hours of suspense in the solitude of the forest, when he had first realized how the happiness of his life was centred in another being, he had not ceased to ponder the question whether he should frankly tell Ruth Hathorne of his love. He felt that now this question must be definitely settled. But there came to his mind the recollection of Mr. Hathorne's reluctant consent to Ruth's visit; how he had at first forbidden it, when he had learned of the heretical influences to which she might be subjected upon the journey; how he had finally consented trusting to his daughter's firmness of principle and faith and confiding in his own sense of honor. Could he, then, in honor make known to Ruth the wishes and the hopes of his heart? At once came the firm, decisive answer to his lips, and as he started to his feet and paced the room he repeated it to himself, as if beating it in upon his brain, that he might not be betrayed into any hasty action. It was with a redoubled sense of loneliness that he sank again into his seat, and gazed from the window across the darkened waters of the river, but he quickly chided himself for doubting for an instant that the divine order was the best, and he thanked God that he could trust his heavenly Father in every event of life.

He found it a little difficult to dismiss the whole subject from his thoughts at once, and almost wished that he might not be obliged to see Ruth so often during the next few months. He felt that it would be a hard task to subdue his strong desire for the sympathy she alone could give him, as he should see her from day to day during her stay in Providence, and should learn to love her better, no matter how much he might strive against it; but he clearly saw the task before him, and from that moment he began to school his heart to be patient in its struggle, hoping for better things in the future.

There was another reason why he felt that he must preserve silence in regard to his wishes; he feared that now, if he should discover that his affection was returned by Ruth, he might find it difficult to give all the time and attention necessary for the successful pursuit of his studies and labors. Now he must devote every energy, every power, every thought, to his great mission, until he should be so firmly established in its pursuit that he could with safety avert his eyes from the pathway even while he was treading it. Then, and then only, would he allow the desires of his heart the gratification which they craved.

He arose and took his Bible from the table, and opened, not at random, but naturally, to one of the places at which he loved best to read. The holy words were a balm to his spirit, an authoritative voice from the inspired word of God speaking unto a conscience that reproached not its possessor:

"I charge thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom, preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine." And again: "But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." And immediately the words of the Master himself came to the young man's mind, and he repeated them again and again: "I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."

CHAPTER XIV.

RUTH'S JOURNAL.

IT had not been without some misgivings on the part of Mrs. Hathorne that she had consented to the plans formed by her children and their father for a visit to their distant friends. She was secretly glad when Mr. Hathorne revoked his decision, and determined that Ruth should not go with John, though her sympathy for her daughter in her disappointment led her to forget her own preferences, and to intercede with her husband in Ruth's behalf. She feared, as did her husband, the influence that might be exerted upon her mind to lead her away from the faith, but she had not the reasons that Mr. Hathorne had for wishing her to go at all hazards; and had she even suspected that motives of worldly advantage had induced her husband to consent to the trial of his daughter, she would have been wholly averse to the fulfillment of the design. As it was, she was unwilling that Ruth should be wholly and at once deprived of that mother's influence to which she had ever been accustomed in the past. Therefore it was that she resolved upon a plan by which she hoped some of it might still be retained. Ruth should keep a journal, for the ostensible reason that her mother might be made a participant in the pleasures of her visit, but with the motive of greater importance which has just been set forth. Mrs. Hathorne hoped that her daughter might be restrained from any indiscreet or venturesome actions or thoughts, feeling that she must submit to her mother's eye a correct record of all that occurred in connection with her visit.

The intentions of the parent were of the best; but, ah! how short-sighted to believe that the innocent, unsuspecting soul could be fettered in its aspirations and deep work-ings by so slight a bond! Ruth cheerfully acceded to her mother's request, and in fulfilling its obligations she had no thought for anything but that her parent should share as fully as possible in every joy and every sorsow of her own heart.

The journal was made for the mother's eye; as we open it, therefore, let us look upon what we find therein as the offering of a child to a parent; and as we hereafter make free use of its pages we may remember that, from the very fact that they were not intended for our perusal, we may get the better knowledge of the life they describe.

"*Saturday, August* 7.—I can hardly realize that dear Mary is so much older than I am, there is so much sympathy in our hearts for each other. This morning we had a long and confidential talk together about our future life, and what we hoped it might be. As she spoke of having desires so nearly coincident with my own, I could not think of her as thirty years old, but only as one who had seen no more of life than myself. Ah! if I could only be sure that when I have passed the joys and sorrows of so long a time I may bring away from them a spirit as pure and humble as hers, I should not tremble as I do when I think of my own weakness and of what the future may have in store for me.

"This morning I rode out with John, as we do on almost every pleasant day, and he took me to the spot that Mr. Williams had previously pointed out to him as the place where the Indians gave him their welcome, after he had been forced to leave Seekonk on the eastern side of the river. John says we can ride to Seekonk some day, when we have time enough to go farther up the stream, where we can more easily find means to cross. We enjoy these rides very much, all the scenery is so beautiful and new; I am only sorry that Mary cannot enjoy them with us, but she has never ridden and fears to make the attempt.

"Ah, mother, as I write this afternoon, you cannot know what thoughts are pressing through my brain, making it almost painful for me to remain quiet for a few minutes at a time, that I may think without interruption. To-morrow Paul is to be baptized, and John and I are to be present at the ceremony with Mr. Williams' family. I wish I could prevent my foolish—wicked, in this instance—curiosity, for it almost torments me, I so much desire to know of these doctrines that Paul has received. If I were by mother's side, I think my thoughts would not trouble me so. She would clear away every doubt, every fear. Without her influence my task will be a hard one. I cannot talk with John; he would only put me off in his blunt way; he would not make any easier my struggle with temptation. Is my visit an ill-timed one? I will pray God it may not prove so."

"*Sunday evening*, *August* 8.—The holy hours have passed away, and my trouble is not allayed; it is even changed to anxiety, my doubt and desire have united in feverish solicitude, and I am wearied with thought.

"We all went to the Baptist meeting this morning, and directly after the services the baptism took place. The exercises, held in a grove, were very much like our own, and therefore were different from what I supposed they would be; for I did not think Baptists and Puritans could worship God in the same way, they are so very different in belief. But I suppose the danger is the greater, as the apparent distinctions are less. Yet there is one question that troubles me: How can Paul have made so terrible a mistake, after studying so carefully not only our faith, but that of so many other sects? It seems to me that it is wrong to judge even heresy till we examine it; but I remember father said that was a dangerous doctrine when Paul said so once in argument with John. Oh that I were not so weak, so prone to evil!

"But I am not writing of the event of the day, and mother will find my diary uninteresting if I am not more careful. I did not like the sermon, it was so different from the preaching of Master Wilson, though I confess I learned from it somewhat of the things I have been troubled about lately. And, after all, it was not so much what was said as the way it was said which I did not like. I had the thought continually in my mind that the minister knew we were to be there and had written his sermon particularly for us, such was his manner and I seemed so often to find his eye looking directly into mine; but I am smiling now at the mere remembrance of my presumption. However, I forgot all unpleasant thoughts when we left the grove and went away to the bank of the river.

"I think, if the beauty of the ceremony is considered, the Baptists have by far the advantage; but of course it is wrong even to think of this, for if their way is not the true way, it is all the worse for its charm. Yet I cannot help thinking this very beauty of the rite may be an argument in its favor; for the solemn, peaceful ceremony, with its deep, symbolic meaning, seemed to me almost worthy of divine origin.

"The assembly at the river was a very large one, yet there was no appearance of disorder, no confusion nor noise; and we could hear the songs of the birds in the clear air above us and from the trees near by as plainly as if we had been alone. The church members were assembled in a group by themselves, and suddenly they commenced singing a hymn. I could not catch the words, as John and I stood at some distance apart from them, but Mary repeated them to me after we came home, and they were so beautiful I think I shall never forget them. I will write them here as she said them, and oh, I wish I could write as well the beautiful melody to which they were sung; for, dear mother, if you had been with us to listen, I know you would have wept as I did, and would have half forgiven the heresy that could express its peace and hope and joy so beautifully.

'As thou, O Christ the Blessed,
Hast bowed thy sacred head,
And passed beneath the portal
That openeth for the dead;
As thou for our salvation
Didst lie within the tomb,
And in glorious resurrection
Depart its darksome gloom;

'So we, as thou in Jordan,
Thy death do symbolize;
With thee we lie in burial,
With thee to life arise.

We leave our deathly garments
  Beneath the liquid wave,
And show thy resurrection,
  Thou Conqueror of the grave.

And in the great hereafter,
  From care and pain set free,
Ransomed, thy praises we shall sing,
  The joy we have from thee,
And standing by the river
  That flows thy throne before,
We then shall see thee eye to eye,
  And bless thee evermore.'

"They sang these words as they all stood on the shore, with Paul and the minister in their midst. After the hymn words of prayer floated out over the multitude, gathering the devotion of the many hearts before soaring upward to the bright, peaceful heavens.

"Then the two went out from their companions and descended slowly into the water, while the silence on the shore was so great that we could hear even the dash of the little ripples as they broke upon the beach. The minister's voice was distinctly audible as he pronounced the solemn formula of baptism, and, mother, as he spoke I saw the face of

Paul, and it was so calm, so peaceful, and at the same time so full of triumphant joy, that I almost thought he saw the Christ whom he was following as he gazed so fixedly toward his beautiful sky.

"They sang again as they came up out of the water, and Paul and his companion joined in the singing, making it seem to me that the band upon the shore was giving its welcome to those who answered from the water, and all uniting in the praise of God.

"There was only one thing I wanted then; I felt that if dear mother were only with me, to see and enjoy the beautiful scene in all its solemnity and depth of meaning, and to know the thoughts in her poor daughter's mind, I should be content. Yet I knew I could never be content until I should be either satisfied my thoughts were right, or convinced of their sinfulness, so that I could put them away for ever. And that brings me back again to the all-absorbing question! Oh, that I may be helped to do what is right—what my Saviour would wish me to do."

CHAPTER XVI.

RUTH'S PERPLEXITIES.

WEDNESDAY, August 11.—It has been very rainy for the last two days, and now, as I write, the sun seems very reluctant to show his face, reminding me of a naughty child who has been commanded by his parent to dry his tears, and who complies with poor grace. On account of the weather we have been obliged to omit our daily rides and out-of-door occupations, and confine ourselves to the house. John, of course, has not been so closely imprisoned as I have, and has passed some time with Paul at his rooms; but I have found the time to pass not wearily, but uncomfortably, for I have had no outward circumstances to call away my thoughts from the temptation within—that temptation which I have come to look upon as so dreadful, and which, in spite of all my efforts, I cannot escape.

"There is one thing that troubles me very much: the more I pray to God to keep me from evil, to keep me even from my sinful thoughts, the harder I find it to banish from my mind these questions that vex me continually. It seems as if there is some power outside of myself that forces me to ponder the subject I would so gladly put off. Ah, dear mother—for I remember always that I am writing this for you—if you could only be by my side I know your poor, perplexed daughter would lose half her trouble.

"A half hour has passed since I wrote the above words, and almost without knowing it I have been over the whole ground again, until now I think suddenly of my diary, and find it has fallen from my lap, unheeded, to the floor. I have come to a determination upon one point. The clouds have all closed up again, and I fear there will be no sunshine to-day; I must find what comfort I can, for I think it may assist me somewhat in writing down some of the thoughts that trouble me so, just as I should pour them out into mother's ear, if she were with me.

"I think Paul's baptism has had a great influence upon me, because it has materially changed some of the views I formerly held, and has intensified some thoughts which I before passed over with little notice. This first immersion that I have ever seen has not impressed me as I feared it would, leading me to regard those who practice the rite as utterly filled with folly, substituting for our own beautiful form one without comeliness of any sort, unauthorized either by Scripture or usage, and unnecessary for the fulfillment of Christ's commands; and I am glad this fear of mine was groundless, for I should be sorry to think thus of Mary or of Paul. But so far from this has been the effect of the ceremony upon my mind that I can no longer regard our own form as even satisfactory, when I look at it as the outward expression of inward consecration to Christ; and more than this, and what troubles me most of all, I can no longer read the history of the

Saviour's baptism in Jordan without the remembrance of last Sunday's scene coming vividly before my mind. I am certain this only immersion I have seen would not come so instantly to mind if I were not conscious that it is a close imitation of the scene described by the sacred writers; and therefore the conviction—ah, mother, it is fast becoming a conviction!—that the Baptists do not lack authority for their practice is forced upon me with a power almost irresistible.

"Still I am not ready to say that we are wrong; that the Baptists have the only authority. God knows I would not dare to say that I, a poor, weak, uneducated girl, am better fitted to judge of such a question than all the learned men who have stood at the head of our church for ages! Even our own good Master Wilson ought to know what is the Lord's will in this matter, and surely it is not right for me to dispute his authority, when I see that he has not only concluded for himself, but is so well convinced that he hesitates not to teach his way to others as the way the Lord commands. But the best are mistaken sometimes; the wisest are often led astray; and the dear Saviour gave thanks to the Father because some things were hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes.

"I have been thinking to-day I would talk with John; yet I am very reluctant to take this step, for I know I can expect but little sympathy from him, though of course he would give me advice and help me as far as he had the power. Mary has been very thoughtful and kind, not speaking to me at all upon the subject that she must know occupies so much of my attention; and I am grateful for her delicate reserve, for I should not like to have her urge me to her way of thinking without regard to my own feelings, as many might do in the present circumstances. I have thought of telling her plainly all my trouble, but she could not help me to the right, if the right is really as we believe it to be. She could only lead me still farther astray. I am resolved to tell John all and ask him to help me.

"I believe this anxiety, this constant strife, is making me ill. My cheeks are hot, my eyes burn, and my aching head throbs heavily. I must not be sick so far away from home. On Thursday, that is, to-morrow, if the weather is favorable, John and I are to ride to Seekonk and then a few miles farther on into the forest, to visit the encampment of Long Solomon's tribe, to which he is again united, since his great bravery in defending us against the red-skins who attacked us has won for him again the respect of the tribe. I am glad for Solomon, the brave, good old friend. I shall never forget I owe my life to him. If we ride as we intend, there will be a good opportunity to talk with John."

"*Thursday Morning, August* 12.—Is it my lot to wander on in darkness, without any helping hand to lead me, until I may of my own efforts find the light? No! I am wrong to let such a thought creep into my mind even for an instant; I fear it was almost impious. God will give me aid, though he may delay it · and if I have his guiding hand, what finite helper do I need?

"'The day is mild and clear and beautiful, but I am forced to stay at home and my talk with John must be put off. Of one thing I am glad, however: Mary has at last been induced to mount my horse, and John is giving her the first riding-lesson. I hope it may not be the last, and I think she will soon find courage enough to sit as easily upon my saddle as on the pillion behind her father.

"'I can write no more to-day. Is it wrong to wish I were too ill to think? to perplex myself farther throughout the long, long day?"

"'*Friday*, *August* 13.—I am much better to-day, and think it could only have been a little cold that made me so unwell yesterday. I hardly thought it prudent to ride, however, when John asked me this morning, and I persuaded him that it would be better for us both if he would remain at home, as I wished to talk with him. I think he knew what I had in mind, for he stood a few moments looking thoughtfully into my eyes, and then without a word he turned away and went to order the horses to the stable.

"When he returned I beckoned him to follow me, and led the way to my room. It so happened that Mary was away looking after some poor people who had lately come to the town, and I knew we should be uninterrupted. When we were seated I told him plainly all that was agitating my mind, concealing nothing of the trouble I have felt for the last few days, and of the seemingly hopeless task before me, the decision of the question continually forcing itself upon my mind. Brother was very patient with me—much more so than I thought he would be—and he listened very attentively till I finished speaking. I think he felt a good deal for me, for I believe I saw a tear in his eye once or twice, and when I had told him all, he arose and walked away to the window, where he stood looking out for some time without speaking. At last, when I had begun to fear he was after all displeased and angry, he came back and sat down by my side, very kindly and gently taking my hand in his while he spoke.

"He said he had feared for some time that I was suffering from some such cause as this, and so he was not surprised that I now came to him with my story. And, moreover, he said he was perplexed how to answer me or help me out of my difficulty, for he was little better able to fully understand the way of truth than I. Then for the first time he told me of a long conversation he had with Paul a few days ago, in which he learned more of the Baptist doctrine than he had ever known before, and he advised me to ask Mary whatever questions might occur to me from time to time, that the way to the truth might become as plain and easy as possible. Particularly he urged me to let no worldly considerations influence me in deciding for myself. However much I might desire to avoid injuring the feelings of our dear parents; however much the claims of all our kindred might force themselves upon my attention; and even though I might be called upon to sacrifice personal peace and happiness in the future,—it was my duty, he said, to allow no observation to be slighted, no argument or consideration to be passed by that could assist in leading me to the right conclusion. He told me plainly that he thought it the duty of every one to examine carefully and prayerfully the Holy Scriptures, and by the light there found to establish for himself his own belief, and not to follow blindly in the footsteps of men who have gone before. He acknowledged that he had been too remiss in the past, too prone to take everything as he found it, believing in all things firmly established as having the absolute, unquestionable authority of God. But upon him also the conversion of Paul and his union with this sect have had a great and irresistible influence, and he has been led to weigh in the balance of Holy Writ the teachings of the church of which we are members and of that in whose midst we now are.

"I was greatly surprised to find John so ready for the conversation which I have so long desired, yet looked forward to with a feeling of anxiety and almost dread. I was yet more surprised to find him so liberal, so prepared to grant to every one the liberty of believing as for himself, nay, to insist upon religious freedom as firmly as Paul himself. Indeed, I think John is out of place at home in Boston, and I doubt if he ever lives there again in peace and quiet, for either he must change much in his opinions or a more liberal spirit must spring up and grow in the colony, if he is to be tolerated in the community where he has lived so long. But I believe that there is yet a greater change in store for him, for his earnest, soulfelt words have convinced me that he will not stop in the investigation of this question until it has led him far away from the faith of his fathers.

"When he arose to leave me after we had talked together for more than two hours, he placed his hand on my head, and reminded me again that in questions like the one we are now considering the highest authority is the word of God, and he added that henceforward in every religious controversy the Holy Scriptures should be his only guide.

"When he had left me, I could only fall upon my knees and pray the good and merciful God to give us both strength and knowledge, that we might be prepared for every event of the future, for every bold and noble Christian deed, for every trial and every sor row, and for the hour of blessing and of triumph.

"On Mary's return she came immediately to our room, and after a little conversation on other subjects, I asked her some questions that I have long desired to have answered. When she had told me all I wished, I was sorry I had not asked long before, for it would have saved much vain trouble and speculation. Very many doubts were cleared away and much information was given me. Since my conversation with her I have been going over again in my mind many arguments that have now assumed a new aspect.

"The chief question with me now is whether baptism is to be administered only to those who believe, or whether infants also may be baptized. I am ready to acknowledge that there is no account given in the Bible of the baptism of infants, and I have heard both John and Paul say that we have no proof that the rite has the authority of the apostles; but in some way or other it has become firmly established in the church, and the spotless purity of the little ones to whom it is administered seems to me to plead strongly in its favor. I suppose there are arguments, strong and convincing, which wiser heads than mine might urge, but this simple consideration is enough for me; at least it is sufficient to hold my thoughts and prevent me from acceding at once to the views of the Baptists."

"*Sunday evening, August* 15.—The whole day have I spent in prayerful study of my Bible. Mrs. Williams, kind and careful as she ever is, thought I had better not go to meeting, as it is held in the grove, for they have no meeting-house, and I readily acquiesced in her decision, because I am still unwell. I am grateful for every moment of quiet I can get, in order to study and think.

"So great a change has come upon me that I am no longer troubled when I ponder the questions that have so long agitated my thoughts. I have fully determined one point, and that is, that whatever I may find to be my duty, whether to renounce my old faith or to cling to it more strongly than ever, I must still act according to my convictions of right, even at the expense of my own happiness and that of others. It has been very hard for me to come to such a decision, but now that it is made I am much calmer, much happier. But, ah, how sad I shall be if I am forced to grieve those dear ones at home who have loved me so tenderly, who have watched over me with perfect care from my infancy, and who are even now counting the days for their daughter's return! Must that return bring sorrow and discord to the happy home? God only knows! But he has shown me that it will be better to displease my earthly parents than to grieve my heavenly Father.

"There is one thing of which I am glad: neither Mary nor her parents nor Paul have urged upon me the consideration of their views. It would be wrong to say that I am as free from influence—Baptist influence—here as I should be at home; but *in fact* not a word has been said to me on this subject unless I have first requested it. If I do become a Baptist, no one will be charged by my parents with resorting to proselytism for my conversion.

"I trembled as I penned those words: *if I do become a Baptist.* How much is involved in becoming a Baptist? I cannot live here; I must return to my home—my home, where the sect is persecuted, hated, shunned as an evil thing. I shall destroy the peace and joy that have always dwelt beneath our roof; I shall bring disgrace and insult upon the head of my dear, dear father; I may hurry my patient and loving mother to a sorrowful grave; I may myself be rejected by all those who are dear to me, cast out from home, held up to public scorn and ridicule—nay, more, be subjected perhaps to public disgrace and punishment. I shudder at the thought. Ah! it was cruel, as I always thought, to be so terribly severe against the poor Quakers; but when one is liable to the same persecution, how much more does he feel the sting of injustice and wrong!

"Last evening, after the closing worship of the day, Mr. Williams came to me and taking me by the hand drew me aside into his study, while the others passed on to their rooms. I could not think at first what he wished, but he soon set my mind at rest, for he took from his desk a little paper and unfolding it, began to read. It was a letter from home, from dear father, which he had just received from the hands of a neighbor who had been on a visit to Boston. I could not keep the tears from my eyes as he read the words my father's hand had written. The good man saw my emotion, and took my hand in his while he continued to read. Though the letter was not written to me, it contained much in which I was interested, beside the tidings of the good health of all the dear ones. When Mr. Williams had finished reading, he turned again to his desk and took out a little parcel for me. I had already begun to wonder that the messenger had brought nothing for me when father had found time to write to Mr. Williams, but now I saw at once the kindness of the latter in allowing me to enjoy the contents of his own letter before the pleasure of hearing it would be lessened by the perusal of my own.

"I carried my package to my room and read and re-read the precious words from father, mother, Grace, and even little Willie; for his 'Dear sister, love me,' that his little hand guided by mother's, I know, had printed for me, was not in any respect unworthy of the many, many kisses I pressed upon it. It was long past midnight when I put my treasures away and lay down by the side of Mary; but even then I could not sleep for thinking over my letters, and I pictured out to myself the dear ones at home as they had gathered around the table in the evening to write to the absent ones. Ah! we never know what home is till we are far away from it; and even then the missives that are so cherished only renew the pang we felt at separation, although we long for them and value them more than gold.

"John came to my room this morning to read my letters, and we afterward had a few minutes to talk together before it was time for the meeting. I think it will not be long before he tells me his decision, in one way or another. And I? Whither shall I turn?"

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DECISION OF JOHN AND RUTH.

MONDAY, August 30.—Again, after so long an interval, I open my diary to write—my diary, that is to be, after all, only a disappointment to her for whom it is written. I have had many joys, many cares, and much pain and suffering during my visit, but the pages of my journal will give to my mother only a short and meagre account of the days I have passed so far away from her.

"I have been sick. For two long and weary weeks there has hardly been an hour when I have been free from pain. The cold that was upon me when I last wrote was only deceiving us when we thought it passing off; and on Monday morning, two weeks ago to-day, I was too ill to rise from bed. A week passed before I began to grow better—a week of much suffering, yet not without its advantages, for I have come to know what true and kind friends are those with whom we are staying. I can never be grateful enough to dear Mrs. Williams and her good husband, and to my sweet, patient, loving friend Mary. She hardly left me for a moment while I was confined to my bed, and she has shown me every attention possible. It was last Thursday that I sat up for the first time, and since that day I have steadily grown stronger and better, until now I am able to commence my writing again.

"Paul has been to see me several times during the last few days, and my room has been supplied with flowers through his kind care ever since I was taken sick. He has commenced his studies with Mr. Williams, and is closeted with him two hours of each day; then he comes to sit with me a little while, and tell me of what he is doing and is going to do.

"I wonder if dear mother would refuse her permission to the marriage of her daughter with Paul? I have been led to think much of the subject during the last week, for Paul has so often spoken of Grace, and in such terms that it is easy to see how his thoughts are running. It is true he is a Baptist, but I hope that when the proper time shall come there will be no hindrance to the union of our dear little Grace with one whom we esteem so highly. I should like Paul for a brother, and I feel sure that John has no more cherished wish than to welcome him into our family, our home. But then we must perhaps lose our little Grace, and she will be transplanted to Paul's home here instead of retaining him at ours in Boston. It would be a sore loss, and it would be hard work to sustain it with equanimity; but the change must come some time, and it will be a cause for joy if one who is no more a stranger than Paul shall inaugurate it."

"*Tuesday*, *August* 31.—'Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.'

"The time has come! These words are no longer meaningless to me; they have at last brought me out of my darkness, and they stand before me in letters of light, showing unto me the truth of God. How bitterly sorrowful I am that I have lived so long without obeying my dear Saviour's command! that I have hesitated as to my duty when the pages of Scripture have ever held the same significant words as now!

"Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. I too will be baptized *in* Jordan. I will follow the footsteps of the Master, I will go down into the water and come up out of the water, I will truly symbolize, as did the great Exemplar, the death unto sin and the resurrection unto life. And then, though my lot may be one of trial and suffering, the blessed remembrance that the Christ whom I follow was persecuted even in the same way shall give me comfort and peace.

"I am a Baptist—my parents would say a heretic—but God knows in whose heart is the truth. I am a Baptist, and though I am trembling, fearing, weeping, as I write—for I am weak, too weak to bear the sorrow of imposing so much anguish on others—I am still rejoicing with a heart full of happiness and thanksgiving that the Father hath at last brought me to the end of the contest and given me the knowledge of his truth. Now it only remains for me to receive strength to perform the duty indicated by that truth.

"The other doctrines held by the Baptists John explained to me fully the day after Mary taught me what they are, and I soon saw the beauty and truth of those few in which I had not already believed. Only this one was left, and from the very reason that this is the most prominent, most distinctive of all, it was the hardest for me to receive. But all the struggle is now over, and peace of mind has again come back to me."

"*Wednesday, September* 1.—As I have had little heart in the common events of life while my thoughts have been so taken up by the perplexities of the last few weeks, so I have not written as fully of those events as I should otherwise have done. Now they shall claim their proper place again.

"This morning, as Mr. Williams was away on business, Paul came and sat with me an hour, and then, supported by his arm, I took my first walk in the open air since I was taken ill. He was, of course, very much rejoiced that I had been led to adopt his own faith, and I learned much from his conversation, though he could hardly talk calmly on account of his happiness that I had found the truth. We endeavored to conjecture the influence my decision might have on John, who has now been absent two days. I long for his return. He went away upon business affairs, as he said, though I strongly suspect he wished to be alone, away from all friends, all who could exercise any influence upon him, until he should have considered carefully and settled definitely the great question that I have now laid aside as settled. If solitude is what he desires, and if he wishes it for this purpose, his absence is no errand of business, but a pilgrimage in search of truth and peace.

"As we walked back and forth in the pleasant garden-path, Paul spoke again of Grace, seeming to love to talk of her, and he spoke even more plainly than ever before, praising her beauty and above all the loveliness of her character, which, he said, could only attract the affection of every one who met her.

"I think Paul feels deeply, far more deeply than he would let any one know, the action of his father in disowning him on account of his bold stand for the truth. He needs a home, and without one he will never be contented; and therefore when he talks so much of our little Grace it is easy for me to see whither his thoughts are turning. I do not at all wonder at this attachment that is so manifest in Paul. Grace is so winsome, so happy in disposition and manner, so lovely and sweet in character, that it would be more worthy of wonder if such a young man as Paul, who is so good and noble, and who has frequented so much our family circle, did not come to love her and to wish for her dear companionship always. Paul's love too would be increased by the peculiar circumstances in which he is placed, for it is only natural that one who is bereft of the love due to him from his kinsmen should seek to replace it by another which should richly compensate for all his loss.

"But I fear all will not be well with the two. First, is it not vain to hope that father will give his daughter to one whom he has cast out from his own heart and home? I cannot believe that even Paul has this expectation, and surely it would be but increased pain to be forced to abstain from plucking the fruit that would more than satisfy the hunger of his craving—nay, starving—nature. Then.

even if father's consent could be obtained, there are two reasons why I should fear for the happiness of both Paul and Grace: not only is she so young as to be hardly capable of determining whether she really loves Paul well enough for a life union or not, but our little Grace would also find a drawback upon her joy from the difference between her faith and that of Paul, which would probably lead to mutual sorrow, particularly if the times are to be as stormy as they have been in the past. Yet all these fears may be idle; and when I say that it is my wish to bring about this great joy if it is possible, I only give utterance to the most cherished hope of my heart. Dear little Grace, our pet, how happy, how blessed she would be!

"I feel that my walk tired me, though it gave me strength at the same time. If the pleasant weather continues, I shall grow better rapidly."

"*Thursday*, *September* 2.—Paul will be here in a few minutes to take me to ride with Mr. Williams and Mary. We are to ride in the vicinity of the town for an hour or two. Mr. Williams asked me to his study just after prayers this morning, and we talked much of the change in my religious belief and of the duties that it imposes upon me. I thought I fully realized what they were before, but they assumed double importance as they were clothed in the good man's words, and I began to fear that I could never satisfy my conscience, never please my Master sufficiently, if I should try even to the full extent of my powers to perform them. But when we knelt down together, and he prayed that I might have the strength required for the pursuit of my warfare, and that Christ would ever bless my efforts, I was no longer troubled. I think he must be truly inspired who has such marvelous power over the souls of his fellow-men."

"*Saturday*, *September* 4.—An eventful day. Brother John returned early this morning, and my first glance at his face assured me that my conjectures about his absence had not been without foundation. He was pale, even haggard, so great had been his struggle and the pain it had caused him, and I was shocked as I saw him tremble, as he rose from his seat, and stagger away to his room. I thought it best to leave him to himself for a few hours, that he might have uninterrupted rest. But I became at last so anxious, fearing he was sick, that I ventured to his room and knocked. As I received no answer, I raised the latch and entered. He was lying with his face turned from me, and I had to approach him closely to see if he was sleeping. I stood by his side a moment watching his peaceful slumber, his breathing as soft and regular as a tired child's, when he became restive beneath my gaze and awoke before I could withdraw. He sprang up suddenly and threw his arms about my neck, weeping bitterly. What could I do but sit down by his side and mingle my tears with his? for I knew his thoughts; I knew how great his struggle, his agony, had been.

"At last he brushed his hand across his eyes and hastily arose. Then he told me how he had passed the days of his absence and what had been the result of his trial; and as he told me that he too felt it his duty to be baptized according to the command and after the example of Christ, we wept again together in mutual sympathy.

"Ah, how bitterly will our dear father rue the day when he gave his consent to our coming hither! But our Father in heaven has had us in his keeping, and has ruled each day's events for eternal good.

"John has decided that we are to return home immediately. He is impatient now, as I am also, to obey our Lord's command; still, he is unwilling to be baptized while here, thinking rightly that, as our lot is cast in our own colony, our influence there will be increased if we take the first great step before the eyes of those in whose midst we are to walk. Therefore we are to leave here as soon as John can settle some business matters of importance, and already I am in a state of anxiety at the prospect of so soon meeting our dear ones. But how very different the circumstances from those under which we took our departure!

"After John left me this morning I remained a few moments in his room, looking out upon the beautiful prospect, and almost regretting that we must leave a scene of such pure delight so soon for the turbulent and even dangerous world before us. As I sat at the open window, I heard voices conversing together outside, and looking down beneath the window, I saw that Mr. Williams, who was leaning upon his axe at the side of his wood pile, and Paul were the speakers. I paid no attention for some time to what they were saying, until they were about parting, when Paul dropped a few words that immediately caught my notice.

"'It is the wisest plan,' he said. 'I would have preferred to labor here, where I could have the benefit of your experience to aid me; but as you say, there is no one there; here you will always be; and therefore it is evident I am most needed in Massachusetts.'

"'The work will be harder there; and more danger, not only from the authorities but also from the Indians, will undoubtedly surround you. But you will have the arm of the Lord, my dear young friend. He will uphold thee in the days of adversity, and in every strait he will compass thee about.'

"This was all, for Paul turned away immediately and went out into the street, while Mr. Williams began his work again, and the blows of the axe seemed to me sharper, stronger than before, as if a weighty matter had been determined. But I had heard enough to show me that another great plan had been matured, and that, if John and I were to leave our friends here for enmity at home, we should at least have one staunch helper in all our trials. I felt deeply thankful that God had so mercifully disposed events that we were not to be wholly without friends, if rejected by those who are so dear to our hearts.

"So to-day I have had enough to occupy my thoughts; first, John and his great change, by which I am not left wholly alone to meet the troubles that are yet to come upon me for Jesus Christ's sake; then, our decision to return home immediately, involving much labor on my part in preparing for the journey, and many misgivings and forebodings as to the unhappiness our sudden return will bring to our home; and, lastly, the joyful news that Paul is to labor in our colony, arriving there soon after ourselves, if, indeed, he does not accompany us.

"And this last item suggests to me again the subject of which I have already written. Paul will now be so near us that he will probably be able to see Grace occasionally, though I have no hope, alas! that father will revoke his decision and allow him to become again a visitor of our dwelling. But there will of course be times when he will see our little Grace; he will not probably make known his love to her for many a day yet, so young she is, yet I know that he will only be more pleased with her as he comes to know her better, and my cherished hopes will yet have their fulfillment.

"Ah, mother, let me write now to you as I would speak were you with me, as I would plead and pray, with my arms about your neck. Let me ask your favor for Paul, your love for him who is without a home, without a mother. Let me beseech your tender influence to bring about a change in dear father's heart, that there may be peace in our home, and that our little pet may be made happy in the love of so noble a heart. Paul is not bad. He is a Baptist, but he is not wicked. Ah, mother, do not let your kind and charitable heart be led away by the feelings and arguments of others, but if you can still love and trust your children, if you can believe that they may still be as dutiful, as loving, as Christian as ever toward their parents, oh! be willing still to receive to your heart and home one who is your children's friend, and who would be made your own; and when the time shall come, as I know it will, when he shall ask for our little Grace to make for him a new home better than all he has lost, may he not be doomed to disappointment in his dearest earthly hopes! It will be hard for my mother to give up the light and joy of her household, but it will be a noble sacrifice of love."

"*Wednesday*, *September* 8.—For the last two days I have been much employed in preparations for our departure, which John thinks will take place on the Monday of next week. I have been visiting, with Mary, all the friends whom I have best known, including many poor people who are under Mary's charge and in whom I have great interest. I have learned much from the order and system which Mary uses in her charitable labors, and I hope I shall be able to apply the experience I have acquired here to my own efforts at home. In the afternoons, too, I have ridden with John and walked with Paul and Mary, for I am quite strong again; but I think I shall do so no more, for such pleasant hours have two bad effects upon me; first, the more I enjoy, the harder it will be for me to relinquish all the happiness that I find here; and, secondly, pure as these enjoyments are, I feel that they while away too many precious moments that should be spent in close and careful preparation for the trials that are so soon to come upon me. I cannot now be too thoughtful; I cannot spend too much time in prayer; for I shall need all the strength I can gain from communion with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

CHAPTER XVIII.

PREPARING FOR A RETURN HOME.

THESE extracts give but a small portion of Ruth's diary—only enough to show how her faith and love to the Lord had been tested and tried, and how she emerged from the ordeal prepared to obey to the letter the commands of Christ.

It was with sorrow at leaving their friends so soon that John and Ruth determined to cut their visit short, but their duty lay before them unperformed, and neither could rest until the great step had been taken which should declare them upon the side of the truth of God as he had made it known to them. To say that Ruth looked forward to her baptism with feelings of unalloyed pleasure would be far from the truth. Inasmuch as she followed the Saviour's command, and felt that she was performing that which would be most pleasing in his sight, she was truly happy; but there were too many consequences involved in this one act to admit of her joy's perfection. By it she expected that all the circumstances of her life would be changed, and that she would be subjected to trials and sorrows without number. Sometimes, when she thought of the future in store for her, she was almost ready to despair, feeling only too deeply her weakness and inability to cope with strong opposition; but she was ever cheered by the remembrance that all that she might suffer would be for Christ's sake, and that in all hours of anguish, when weighed down by heaviness of heart, the cross would become her support—that cross which she had taken as her burden.

As for John, his feelings were very different. His struggle had been hard, the contest fierce; but now that he had conquered and determined for the right, he chafed with impatience at delay, and would not allow any thought of personal ill to enter his mind for an instant. He was like the eager warrior, pressing forward to the strife with quick step and hot cheek, thinking not of the danger after the first thrill of excitement has passed over him, and only exulting in the victory he anticipates. He longed for the active work, the privations and hardships that he knew it would afford him, and could not understand the timid, shrinking hesitation of his sister. He was very kind to her, nevertheless; he never spoke to her but with the utmost gentleness, and even when remonstrating with her and exhorting her to be strong and fear not, his voice was ever mild and brotherly, and his loving tenderness had greater influence upon her than any ill-judged harshness of manner would have had.

John was very busy during the remainder of their stay at the Plantations in settling his business affairs in such a manner that he could return to Boston, but Ruth found many an hour which she could spend in Mr. Williams' study in compliance with his invitations and her brother's wishes, listening to the good man's words of instruction and encouragement. Mr. Williams knew, far better than either of his young guests, how bitterly they would be opposed, and how hard it would be for them to bear with patience and meekness the stripes that would be laid upon them, often perhaps by the hands of those whom they dearly loved, and it would have been antagonistic to all the impulses of his nature not to afford them what help his experience could give.

Precious hours were those that were spent in conversation between the old disciple and the maiden, Ruth; and often in after days, when overwhelmed with perplexity and care, she found the good man's words recurring to her mind, proving themselves fraught with golden truth and wisdom, and great was the help she could often give to the dear ones suffering with her by calling to mind the words of him whose trials had been so much like their own, and by applying to their wants the lessons she had received from the lips of the proved disciple of Christ.

While preparing her for the work that lay before her, discouraging as the contemplation of it might be, the good man always spoke cheerfully and hopefully in regard to it. He had no fear that Ruth, weak and helpless as she felt herself to be, would not prove herself strong in the Lord; and it was by letting her see the confidence he had that the Lord would strengthen her for the work that he infused a part of his own hardy faith and vivid hope into her breast.

It was the day before their departure, which they were obliged to defer till the middle of the week, when Paul met them with a radiant face, his eyes beaming with joy, and gave them the glad tidings that his father's heart had been again opened to him and he was no longer without a home and the love of a parent. It had proved too much for Mr. Wallingford; he, too, needed the genial warmth of love shining upon the cold pathway of his life, and he found his home no longer tenable with the consciousness that he for whom he had prepared and perfected it was banished from its doors by his mandate. He found himself no less lonely than Paul, and he could no longer deny his heart its fondest desire, when he learned from the lips of strangers that his son was soon to depart for a long absence. Mr. Wallingford was hasty, but easily repentant; passionate, but not obstinate; and when once he made the resolve to correct an error nothing, not even the fear of ridicule or contempt, could deter him from accomplishing his purpose. So now, when he saw how blindly angry he had been, he was not slow to retrace his steps, to seek out his son, his only child, and to ask his forgiveness for his great sin.

So Paul had gone back to his dearly-loved home and to him who still kept his love for him great and whole as ever; and now he came to give the good tidings to the friends who had mourned with him upon the loss of these blessings.

John's warm pressure of the hand and heartfelt words of sympathy, as well as the tears of joy that filled the large, dark eyes of Ruth, would well have assured the young man of the truth and depth of their friendship, even had he not known it fully before; but now their manifest feeling was all that was required to fill to overflowing his heart, and he wept like a little child.

But there were too many things to occupy the minds of the three friends for them to allow the luxury of this great joy to hold their thoughts too long, and it was not many minutes before they were talking rapidly of the events that were to transpire in the next few days and weeks. Paul could not be ready for his journey to Boston for nearly a month, but as soon as he should arrive there he purposed to seek them out wherever they might be—and ah, he hoped it would be at the old home—and unite with them as much as possible in their work of the Master. There were many messages to be given, many friends to be remembered, for Paul had not lived in Cambridge for more than a year without forming many acquaintances, which had not all been lost to him when he espoused the cause of the persecuted and despised; and then, after all that pertained to others had been called to mind and said, there were still left the parting words between the friends themselves.

The separation was to be a short one, but the three had become so closely united through the medium of their mutual struggles and fears and hopes that it was no light matter, after all, the parting for this one month.

The reader is aware, too, of that which Ruth and John did not know; therefore he will not wonder that Paul Wallingford had many a word to say at parting, both of farewell to those who were to leave him and of greeting and remembrance to the friends so far away. Every moment of delay was precious, every syllable that fell from the lips he watched so closely was music to his ear, and when at last the time was come that he must go away, Paul wandered toward his home with lingering feet, his thoughts recalling over and over again all the joy and the sadness of the last hours.

And Ruth? She slept at last, though only after a long, long watch, wherein the happy past, the present, with its Ruth and Paul and —Grace, and the doubtful, troublous future were all passed before her anxious mind.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE PURITAN RECEPTION OF JOHN AND RUTH.

IT was a bright, sunny afternoon when the little party passed over the neck of land that connected Boston with the main land, and the face of nature was all so gay and smiling that our young travelers were cheered into the hope that the little town that received them so happily would not cast upon them its severe frown and thus give the lie to the propitious mother of all.

The cool, breezy atmosphere infused a vigor into every member of the party, though they were somewhat wearied by their day's journey, and even the horses they rode stepped lightly and more easily beneath their burdens, while the tired pack-horse plodding along in the rear sniffed gladly the fresh sea-breeze and neighed loudly with satisfaction.

Long Solomon, who led the advance—for Ruth's entreaties and Paul's request had prevailed on him to act again as guide—halted suddenly after they had fairly entered the town, and waited until John rode up to him; then he seized his bridle-rein without speaking and led him a little apart where they could converse without being overheard.

"You home again!" he said, in a low voice. "Me know why you come so soon. You and little squaw Baptist like Solomon. Solomon keep lookout, you keep lookout, both help now and then. Solomon know much about Baptist men and Boston men, and he pray for little squaw."

"Thank you, Solomon; I know you are a good friend and wish us well. But have no fear for us! God will take care of us and show us the way out of all straits." John pressed the Indian's hand as he spoke, but seeing, after a little pause, that the guide was not satisfied, he continued: "We are glad of your friendship, and it has already been valuable to us on many occasions; you must see me to-morrow and as often as you can while you are waiting for Paul; and I know Ruth will be only too glad—"

"Yes, yes, me know!" interrupted Solomon, with an impatient wave of the hand. "But look out, watch! Solomon always ready for help you. He knows the strong house and can help away; save you."

"Ah, you are afraid for us!" said John, as the Indian's meaning dawned on his mind. "You mean you can help us if we are persecuted. Ah, good friend, God will be the only helper then; for if we are called upon to suffer for his sake, we must not try to escape the trial without his manifest approval. We may be imprisoned, but it will be God alone who can set us free, for it would be deserting our cause to show that we are unwilling to suffer for it. No, Solomon, you are kind and thoughtful, but there must be no desertion of the right, and God would be little pleased if we were to shirk our duty."

The Indian stood in silence for a moment; then he looked up suddenly, as if all doubt had been driven from his mind, and said, as he looked away uneasily to where Ruth was sitting upon her horse waiting for John s approach: "She must be suffer never! No harm be to little squaw while Solomon lives and can help! Me saw Indian runner in woods this morning, and he tell how white faces be angry with you and Paul and little squaw, and how a man come from Plantation and tell, and how the teacher talk at other day meeting, yesterday—no! day 'fore then. They know all; the man tell them. Send for me for save you; me be in hut over river."

So saying, and waiting for no word of reply, Solomon turned abruptly away and left John to pursue his way without him.

There were contending emotions in the young man's breast as he rejoined his sister and their attendants. He felt sorry that the tidings of the great change in his opinions had reached his parents from other lips than his own, but at the same time it was a relief that the first shock of sorrow upon the loved ones would not now be witnessed by himself and Ruth, for he knew what pain the sight of their sorrow would inflict upon both.

As they rode on slowly toward their home, he communicated to Ruth the tidings he had just received from the Indian, that she might be fully prepared for anything that should occur upon their arrival; and Ruth, as well as he, was glad that there would be no long suspense for them, but that all would be known, the real feelings and the true bearing of their parents toward them, immediately upon their reaching home. Yet it was with aching, yearning hearts that they neared the familiar dwelling, and the hand of the maiden trembled as she restrained the eager horse, impatient for his stall, and she would fain have had one little moment to herself to weep and pray ere the great sorrow that she so much feared should come upon her. But they were now only a short distance from the home that they had left in peace and happiness two months before, and there must be no delay now that they were returning to find it disturbed and afflicted, they knew, and perhaps a home for them no longer.

The streets were quite still as they passed on, for it was Saturday and the hours of the sacred day were near at hand. They met not more than two or three persons who were well known to them. But it was plain enough to the eyes of the sad travelers that the recognition of these few was far colder than the Puritan frigidity of manners would require or even warrant; in one instance, where two stood conversing together upon the corner of the street, John saw them shake their heads ominously after the little cavalcade had passed, and overheard a few words of sympathy expressed for Master Hathorne in his great affliction. He turned his eyes quickly to Ruth's face, hoping that she might not have heard the words, but the bright tear glistening on her pale cheek told him that they had reached her ear and sent the first winged arrow to her heart.

It was but a little time before they turned from the street into the paved courtyard before the door of their home. Anxiously and with straining eyes they scanned the windows of the dwelling for the sight of some one of the dear faces, and the heart of Ruth leaped with joy as she saw the door open quickly and her mother, whose keen ear had caught the sound of the horses' hoofs on the stones, stand with outstretched arms upon the threshold, waiting to receive them.

But were there no others to welcome them? Would not the father, would not Grace, little Grace, and Willie greet those who had been so long absent? They knew not; their mother was alone.

But whatever might be in store for them, it was very dear to have their mother's loving embrace and her warm kiss of welcome, though poor Ruth could only lay her head on her breast and weep long and silently, as she thought how pained and sad was the heart that still gave her its undiminished love, that still remained unchanged in its affection, though all others should be embittered even to anger.

It was hard for John to remain unmoved while he witnessed the emotion of his mother and sister, and he hurried away to his own chamber, that they might feel no restraint upon their conversation, rightly judging that the mother and daughter could better interchange their feelings and thoughts if the ear of no other, even though a son and brother, should listen to their words.

He stopped a moment as he passed his mother's room upon the second floor, for he heard a child's voice within which he knew to be Willie's. As he entered the apartment he hesitated and drew back an instant; Grace was there, sitting at the window, her face buried in her hands and weeping bitterly.

"Don't cry, Grace!" little Will was saying, while he stood before her looking up anxiously into her face. "I guess sister Ruth will be good. I guess she don't want to be cross and naughty if she is a Baptist, and I shall let her kiss me—"

The child turned and saw John upon the threshold; in an instant he was in the strong arms held out to him and his own little hands were clasped tightly behind his brother's neck. Grace started quickly from her chair as she heard John's well-known voice speaking her name, but after a single hasty step toward him she stopped, turned away again to the window, and sobbed as if her very heart were breaking with its grief.

Poor John! He read it all at a single glance. He saw the love of the heart trampled under foot; the warm feelings of kindred shackled; the spontaneous outburst of affection restrained by the iron hand of prejudice; and as he advanced into the room and seated himself upon the low couch on which Willie slept, he felt that the first great trial had come upon his soul, and an aching, burning wound already convulsed his heart with an agony greater, it seemed, than he could bear. But he calmed himself, and his voice was steady and firm as he took Grace by the hand and drew her to his side.

"Dear sister, dear little Grace, do not sob so!" he said. "I know you love me as well as ever, and that you and mother and little Willie will never thrust us out of your hearts, though you may be forced to treat us coldly. Never believe that we can think ill of you! I know that even father still loves us, though he rejects us in obeying what he thinks to be the call of duty. Ruth and I are still yours, still will love and cherish you, though you yield to father's wishes and commands, however harsh they may be. And, little Grace, as Willie is bold enough to do what he knows is right, to run to his brother's arms, to offer his sweet kiss to Ruth, so do you do all you can to make all happy and to show father that though he takes our home from us, he can never deprive us of the love of that home."

Grace could not speak. She leaned her head on John's shoulder, the great sobs still racking her frail form, and as he raised his hand to her cheek and tried to soothe her distress, she kissed it again and again with passionate earnestness.

And thus they sat until the setting sun cast his golden rays into the room, and on the opposite wall a flood of light-ripples shimmered a little while and then faded quite away. Grace still rested at his side, half fearful that she was disobeying her father's command, yet joyful that she was once more encircled by that strong, brotherly arm; little Willie nestled close upon the other side; and John, caressing both, now talked with Grace and now with the child of what had occurred during his absence, seeking only with kindly art to hold their thoughts, for a little time at least, from the great, distressing theme.

Once or twice as they talked, Willie was reminded of Ruth, and would have run to her instantly had not John restrained him, saying that she would come to them soon. He was easily diverted, and prattled on about some new toy he had received or some plan for future play that had entered his little head. Then the twilight deepened into dark, and still there was no sound from below, and their mother and Ruth did not come.

But let us enter another apartment in the mansion; let us see the father who did not welcome his children home, and who had laid the command upon the others of his household that they should show by their outward demeanor that they could hold no intercourse with heretics.

In a small room that adjoined the family-room and which was used by Mr. Hathorne as a sort of office or study—if the word may be applied to the private apartment of a man who was no more of a scholar than was Ezekiel Hathorne—the worthy Puritan was pacing back and forth in a state of restless activity that had become almost painful to his companion, who was no other than his spiritual teacher, Master Wilson.

Mr. Hathorne had witnessed the arrival of his children as he stood at the window behind the closed shutters; he had seen his wife welcome them, as she had before said she must do; and his own heart had yearned to greet them also, notwithstanding the stern resolution he had made to show no sign of favor or love for any one who could turn away from the Puritan faith, even though that person should be his own child. It had been hard for him to gaze upon Ruth's pale, sad face, the dear face he had not seen for months, the face of the darling of his love, and not bend over it and kiss the lips that would have smiled so sweetly upon him. His brow contracted and the moisture came to his eyes in spite of all his efforts to command his feelings, and he was fain to turn away and begin his nervous walk to and fro, to and fro, in the little room. He could not hide his emotion from the keen eyes of the minister, but the latter imputed it only to the good man's sorrow at the great affliction that had fallen upon him.

For some time neither of the two had spoken, for Mr. Hathorne could hardly trust his voice and the other was a little discomposed at witnessing the afflicted father's grief, when suddenly the former stopped in his hasty walk and threw himself heavily into the great oaken arm-chair with a deep groan.

"I have sinned! I have sinned!" he cried, bitterly. "'I have sinned greatly in that I have done!' Oh, that I had never consented to my daughter's absence from home and its influence; for she, at least, might have been saved from the sleight of men and their cunning craftiness."

"It is not your sin," answered Master Wilson, solemnly; "it is the sin of those who have poisoned the ear and corrupted the heart, not of the Christian father who would have kept his children near the Lord."

"But I placed them in the way of temptation, and when they wished to go to that evil colony—would that it were swept from the face of the earth!—I did not hinder them. Upon my conscience rests the stain, and I alone can satisfy God by repentance and the atonement of suffering."

"You are too severe, too self-criminating, good Master Hathorne. Truly it is hard to see a brother in distress, and I pity you, but you make the case too hard. Both of your children, of an age responsible for itself and its deeds, are subject to our Lord's displeasure, but you are free. Let not the agony of the father's heart, as he sees his children forsake the way of truth to become heretics, and therefore deluded sinners, be increased by useless accusations of self."

"My cup is full of bitterness; it runneth over. This gall of heresy is presented to my lips by my own loved ones. How can I bear to see them drink of it, even though I taste not of it myself?"

"They have sinned, my brother in Christ, but, though their sin be great, there may yet be forgiveness for it. I cannot exhort you not to grieve, for what could pain a father's heart more than to see his offspring departing from the truth? But remember your duty, and let them be turned to repentance. God hath given thee wisdom to deny the dictates of the heart, to show them that in turning from God's way they have turned also from their earthly father's home and love. Be strong and persevere, and God in his mercy will yet bless thee."

"I will be calm. I will not let the feelings of the father triumph over the duties of the Christian," Mr. Hathorne cried as he sprang hastily to his feet and recommenced his walk. "If my children are not saved, it shall not be through their father's neglect. But do you help me, my guide and teacher. Pray for and support me, and to-morrow tell my affliction to the church, and let the people pray for the removal of this dreadful blight that has come upon me."

Even as he spoke the door leading to the adjoining room was thrust a little open, then hesitatingly closed, while the sweet voice of Ruth was plainly heard in the room, saying:

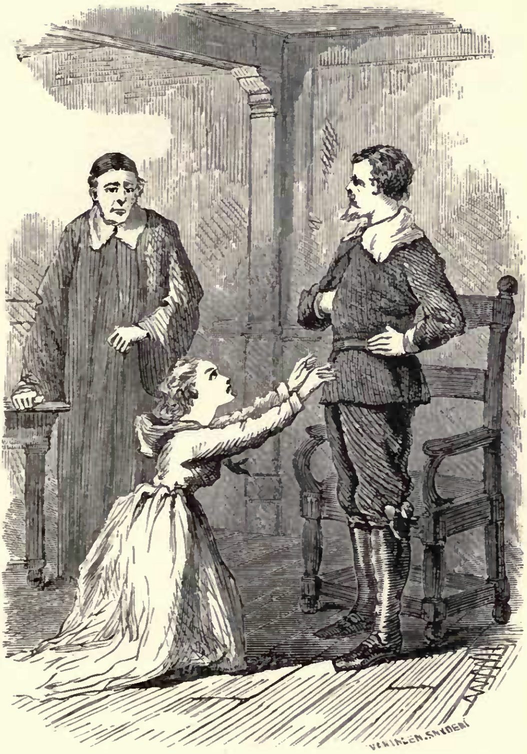
"No, mother, I cannot stay merely because a stranger will witness our meeting. If father will not come to me, I must go to him, and God will be with me."

In the next instant the door was flung back, and Ruth had thrown her arms about her father's neck and was weeping upon his breast. For a few moments the father forgot the words he had been uttering so lately. His darling's head rested once more on his bosom, her dear arms were around his neck, and the old days all came back again to his mind with such force that he could not think that they were gone for ever. But such reflections could not be harbored long, for the eye of Master Wilson was upon him, and no show of weakness either of the man or the Christian could be permitted in the presence of the teacher of the First Church. Mr. Hathorne gently but firmly disengaged his daughter's embrace and held her away from him at arm's length, while he gazed steadily into her weeping eyes. Thus for a moment he stood in silence, nerving himself for the task before him, and when he spoke at last, it was with a voice of strong resolve and unbending purpose, hard and cruel.

"Ruth Hathorne—Ruth no longer to me, for thy beauty hath faded away with thy faith in the Lord's truth—thou hast cast away thy father from thee as a worthless thing, and now thou comest back to weep upon his bosom! There is no longer rest for thee there; and the roof that shelters thy kindred must no longer shelter thee, the God-forsaken heretic. I cannot turn thee out into the night. Remain here till morning, then seek another home in the hours of the day sacred to him whom thou hast already wronged."

The cold formality, the forced heartlessness of the words were to the trembling maiden what the foaming, dashing, cruel waves are to the fragile flowers of the sea. She had begun to hope in that little instant that she had passed in his silent embrace, but now the shock was only the more severe, and a weary blank fell upon the heart that had so yearned for words of love and sympathy.

He released his iron hold upon her arm, and she sank heavily to the floor. Her embrace was now that of a suppliant, as she clung to his feet, praying him for his



Master Hathorne's Family. Page 290.

mercy, but he heeded her not, and only looked away to the aged man, who was the minister of God, with a smile of conscious rectitude upon his lips. And when the maiden cried in her anguish: "Father, be kind to me, for the love you used to have for me, for the sake of Christ, whose servants we are!" he turned away and left her fainting upon the floor.

And then the aged Wilson, whose heart was really tender and who pitied sincerely the stricken child, but who was led by a conscience blinded by prejudice, approached her as she lay still and motionless, her face buried in her hands.

"My daughter!" he said, kindly, and the sound of the strange voice aroused her, "be not utterly cast down, but repent of this grievous sin and turn again to the way of truth. There is yet time for penitence and forgiveness." Then he turned away to Mr. Hathorne and said in a low voice. "My brother, you have done what is right before the Lord, and he will bless thee. The church shall know thy sorrow and comfort thee."

When the mother and daughter were again alone, Ruth calmed herself and wiped her mother's tears, and prayed her ever to love the banished daughter, who would always think of her, remember her blessed teachings, and feel that whatever should come there would still remain one heart whose love would be undiminished and perfect as in the happiest days.

Then with lingering steps and sad hearts they went to meet the other dear ones who had been waiting for them so long, and though there was sorrow in all their hearts when Ruth narrated to them what had taken place in the study, though there were many tears shed in thinking that their little band was broken henceforth, they yet rejoiced that they could still love each other in adversity, and could pray that all might yet meet again in the better land.

CHAPTER XIX.

GOODMAN LOWE'S HOME.

IN the early morning of the Lord's Day, after the cheerless breakfast of which the father would not partake, John Hathorne sallied forth in quest of a home for himself and Ruth. The streets of the little town were quiet, as if the inhabitants still slept. Only the leaves upon the trees rustled with a subdued murmuring; the birds sang blithely in the clear, cool air; the sunbeams flashed upon the dancing wavelets of the bay; all nature seemed at rest yet rejoicing and giving praise to God. There was no discordance in the outward world, no troublous turbulence, no strife. Alas! that in the heart of man, for whom all else was made, should be dissension and the blinding storm of pride, fanaticism, and passion.

John was not wholly without guide in his efforts; the old family servant—who could not suffer the frail Ruth, whom she had nursed as an infant, to wander forth from her father's roof while she remained inactive—had directed John to a family living at the extreme north part of the peninsula, and which she had often served in times of sickness. Goodman Lowe was already known to John, though he was but little acquainted with the members of his family from the circumstance that they were all Baptists—a fact that had hitherto kept him from them, as it now was the cause of bringing them together. The old servant, Prudence, was a strong Puritan in everything but the spirit of intolerance; and though she despised all forms of heresy, she would never turn away from the heretic himself if he had any need of her sympathy or aid. She had been a good friend to many a family in the little town, and she felt sure that if she now asked of this one the favor of shelter for her loved ones, the request would not be denied.

Nor was the good old servant mistaken in the opinion she had formed. It was an easy matter for John to gain admittance beneath the roof of so benevolent a man as Goodman Lowe. He had only to state his need and why his own home was closed against him to enlist the heartfelt sympathies of each member of the family, and to ensure both for himself and Ruth the most cordial welcome.

The streets were filled with people wending their way to the meeting-house as he passed again to the familiar dwelling of his father. Neighbors and friends he was forced to meet; some of them greeted him as usual, but many passed him by without recognition, and he was glad when he turned out of the street into the garden before the house.

Sadly but swiftly Ruth made the necessary preparations for their departure. All that they needed they could not take with them, of course, on the Lord's Day, but they would be sent to them in the following week. As usual, all the family were at meeting in the accustomed seats, not even the mother, whose heart yearned after her absent children, being suffered by the stern Puritan to remain at home.

The last act of the weeping maiden was to place the journal of her visit upon her mother's table, where she would be sure to find it upon returning; and then with many a longing glance into the silent rooms, whose doors stood open upon the hall, and with many a prayer that God would bless the loved ones left behind, and lead them to think often with pity and love of the exiled brother and sister, the two went forth into the deserted streets and turned toward their new abode.

Even as they passed the door of the dear old meeting-house, which they might enter no more, the aged pastor, all unknown to them, was reading from a little slip of paper the request of Mr. Hathorne that his terrible affliction might be alleviated by the divine blessing, besought by the prayers of his Christian brethren. And as the hearts of the congregation were stirred against them, the brother and sister, the true sufferers, with the hand of the Lord to uphold them, went their way to their home with strangers.

Goodman Lowe's family consisted of his wife and three children, one son and two daughters. John was assigned a room in the loft with the son, while Ruth was given a pleasant apartment upon the second floor looking out over the waters of the bay toward Noddle's Island. It was with joy that she learned that she was to occupy the room alone, for she knew that there yet remained for her many sad hours in the future, when she would think it no small blessing to be able to steal away to her bedside and weep and pray in solitude. As for John, it made less difference to him that he must have a companion to share his room. He would be away the greater part of the day, and in his leisure hours Ruth would be only too glad to have him find in her apartment quiet and rest.

There was one subject upon which they were doomed to disappointment, and it was a bitter disappointment indeed to Ruth. They had hoped that John, as he would still remain in his father's business—for Mr. Hathorne could not find it for his interest to allow his son, though a heretic, to withdraw from this connection with himself—would have many opportunities of hearing from the dear ones at home and of communicating with them; but upon the first attempt of John with this end in view, the stern Puritan father commanded that it should never be repeated. They could speak together of business affairs, but no further word must pass between them, no mention of mother or sister or brother. What part had Baptists with Puritans? or what relations existed longer between the banished children and those of the home circle? The hope must be given up, and, even more than that, John clearly saw the impossibility of any duration of business connection between father and son when in all else they were estranged; and he felt that for his own peace, if for naught else, he must soon take the steps that should make the separation complete, if indeed his father himself did not first have recourse to the measure.

The first week in their new home passed away. It was Sunday evening again, and John and Ruth sat together in her room, looking out over the waters silvered by the rays of the full moon. They had attended for the first time the religious services of the little band of Baptists gathered in Charlestown, who had been organized into a church in the preceding May. Both had been deeply impressed by the solemnity of the service, held as it was beneath the shelter of no roof and with the dread uncertainty hanging over the assembly of the action of their enemies, excited by the calm persistency of the little church in its Christian duty.

Now Ruth was speaking of the duty that still remained for them to perform, and which had been pressed upon their minds with renewed force by what they had seen and heard in the morning.

"I think the agony of Peter must have been insufferable when he had thrice denied his Lord," she said, after a little silence. "I feel that every day I live without baptism I in a manner deny my Saviour, and the thought is often torture to me."

"But you are prevented by circumstances entirely beyond your control, and therefore you are wrong in feeling thus," John answered. "We are both desirous from our very hearts to obey the Master's command; and, God be thanked! he looks not only at the outward act, but at the heart of man."

"I know I should not let this distress me—and indeed it does not when I think calmly upon it—but we are so peculiarly placed that I cannot always reflect as deliberately as I ought. The eyes of the whole town are upon us to-day, and I often feel that there may be many who are doubting the strength of our resolution and of our zeal, as they see the delay for which they know no reason."

"But you forget. So much has happened in the last few days you do not realize it is only a week since we returned. Poor sister! you have been lonely, too, and the hours have seemed long, I know. But do not be troubled, for the next Lord's Day will witness our baptism, and all will know that we have indeed chosen Christ's way and are trying to follow in his footsteps. My only regret is that none of our family can be present; but we cannot tell what may be God's will. He often leads men to think deeply and to act boldly through means the very opposite to those we would have chosen."

"I do not fear for our dear ones, for I believe they are Christians, though of Grace, it is true, we cannot be sure, for she has never spoken of a change of heart, nor has she ever conversed with me about such thoughts and feelings as you and I have often talked of together. But God will have them all in his holy keeping."

They sat for a time in silence. As Ruth gazed out upon the waters and the confining shores, the hills rising in dark outline against the sky, and then the sky itself studded with countless stars, with the cold, pale moon moving on amid the host like a stately queen surrounded by her court, the words of the Psalmist came into her mind, and in a low, sweet voice she repeated the passage of the divinely-inspired poem: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers; the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor.

Then as she returned again from the thought of the great goodness of God in giving to her his love and care and protection, to the remembrance of the coming event in which she was to consecrate herself before the eyes of men to the service of his only-begotten Son, the whole beauty and significance of the act came more vividly than ever before her, and she said:

"I think I have never realized before so fully as I now do the importance of baptism even apart from the fact that it is commanded by Christ. It seems to bind the Christian by so many obligations, and must surely keep him ever nearer the truth by its sacred memories and holy anticipations; for it seems to me it is an act not only of the present nor for the past alone, but for all the future. It looks forward as much as it looks backward. It shows our death with Christ and our rising to a new and endless life; I shall hope always to remember this and to live separated from the world, and in all things to be Christ's own disciple, leaning upon his wisdom and counsel, and following without question whither he may lead. Ah, John, how happy we are in the consciousness that he is pleased with us, as we give ourselves, in the way he ordained, to his service!"

"To obedience, to close imitation of his example and perfect life, to submission to his will, whether it seem to us harsh or kind—nay, rather to believe it always kind, to think that he can be never any other than our loving and gracious Lord!"

John paused as he spoke, for the thought was overwhelming for the moment.

"Rightly is baptism placed at the very starting-post of the Christian race," he continued, "for by it we learn that nothing is more important than to be ready and willing in every event of life, from day to day and hour to hour, to confess our calling and our love for the Master. More than this, the remembrance of Christ's death for us and our death with him and rising with him to a new life, a life that shall never end, this will make us strong where we might otherwise be weak, unfaltering in our devotion where we might be tempted to look backward from the work to which we have put our hands."

"'Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life,'" repeated Ruth, thoughtfully. "I am not afraid, dear John, that in this ordinance God will not bless us. I am not afraid that we shall ever repent the step that makes us wholly his, not only in his sight, but in the sight of angels and of men. Nor am I afraid to take upon myself, weak as I am, the responsibilities which it imposes upon me, for I know that God will help me, and that the harder the labor becomes, the more strength I shall receive from on high. Whenever I tremble, as I sometimes do as I think of the struggles that may lie before us, the remembrance of Christ's words gives me courage and hope; for I can never forget that he said: 'Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me;' and instead of fearing as I once should have done, when he says: 'I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also,' I can only whisper, 'Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus.'"

CHAPTER XX.

GRACE HATHORNE VISITS RUTH.

JOHN could not long delay what he plainly saw to be his duty. If his father could not suffer him to dwell beneath the roof that sheltered the rest of the loved ones, was it right to labor in common with him, and thus say to the world that all the tenderest ties of affection could be rudely strained and snapped for the sake of truth, while the claims of business and self-interest could assert their supremacy? Clearly not. In accordance with this decision, John took early occasion to talk with his father, and firmly but respectfully to decline any farther connection with the business of which he had been so long the chief support.

When this step had been taken, both John and Ruth were much more at ease, for the position in which they stood was much more clearly defined, not only to their own eyes, but to the eyes of others. It grieved them both that they must be so completely severed from all connection with those they loved so dearly; but as the ripe fruit, hung just above his reach, is only a means of adding to the pangs of the starving man, so the daily occurrence of the means of learning of their dear ones while that means could never be used was a torture to the brother and sister which they were not sorry to escape.

Besides, Ruth could not help cherishing the hope that John's act might in some way be the means of changing her father's cruel resolve. A sad revelation had been made to her upon that memorable night when she had informed her parents of Paul's conversion and of his open avowal of Baptist principles. Since that time she had never been able to reverence so fully her father's character; she was compelled, though unwillingly, to own to herself that there was weakness where she had before seen only noble strength and

Christian constancy; and she dared to think sometimes that perhaps his heart might yet be turned, even though it should be by the baser means of personal profit.

But no such thought entered the mind of John. He cared less for his banishment from home, for he was every day out in the busy world, active and intent on occupations that held his own mind and energy. There was less suffering therefore on his part than on that of the maiden, who sat alone in her chamber with nothing to withdraw her thoughts from the days gone by, or who at most could enjoy only the companionship of comparative strangers, that were kind indeed, but could not give the full and satisfying love which she needed.

Indeed, so different was John's nature from that of his patient, forgiving, and loving sister that even if his father had recalled them to their home, under the influence of such a worldly motive, the high spirit of the young man would have proudly refused the proffered favor. Ruth, however, needed the peace and joys of home too much to reject them if within her reach, and she would have asked only a hint from her father, prompted by whatsoever motive, to return at once and forget in the joy of her heart all the trouble of the past.

But it was not so to be. Day after day went by; another week was drawing near its close; still no word from home came to cheer them and bid them rejoice.

It was on the evening of Friday, when the streets of the town were shrouded in the dark folds of the garment of night, that the inmates of Goodman Lowe's dwelling were alarmed by the loud knock of authority upon the outer door and the voice of the sheriff demanding admission. Both Ruth and John were sitting with the family in the lower room when this rude disturbance occurred, and it was with trembling hearts that they looked upon each other as they were convinced of the character of the visitors. John passed quietly round to where Ruth was sitting, and stood with one hand resting easily upon the back of her chair, as their host advanced to open the door.

The officers entered immediately, and pressed forward even into the room where the family were gathered. They drew back, however, on observing the little group about the table, and the sheriff motioned his assistants to retire. He then demanded in a loud voice the surrender of the person of Thomas Gold, charged with holding fellowship with and aiding in their convocations, made contrary to the statute, the body of Anabaptists calling itself a church established in Charlestown.

Goodman Lowe's cheek had paled as he heard the first words of the official, but when the name of the person sought was mentioned his great relief was as apparent as his fear had been. It would have ill accorded with his feelings, with the love he had conceived in the last two weeks for Ruth and John, to have seen either of them taken from the hospitality of his roof to the narrow walls of the Boston prison.

"Thomas Gold is not here," he said. "Why do you seek him here and so rudely interrupt our peace and quiet? Thomas Gold will be best found at his own home."

"I was told I should find him here if I made haste. The law often requires such prompt action of its servants that we must sometimes appear too hasty. Has not Gold been here to-night?"

"Goodman Gold was here an hour ago, but I know nothing further about him. I suppose he is at his home on the island."

The officer withdrew almost as abruptly as he had entered, and as he passed through the hall to the door they heard him order one of his assistants to get a boat ready to cross to Noddle's Island, where Goodman Gold dwelt. The little group in the cheerfully lighted room laid aside whatever occupations they had been engaged in, all their thoughts and interests centring in this new and long-feared event. They could only imagine the scene at the quiet home of Thomas Gold, the terror and anguish of the loving family whose head was so suddenly taken away from them to suffer they knew not what. The damp walls of the prison, the cruel scourge, the torture of the branding iron, or the executioner's dread array, all arose in an instant before their eyes. Such things had been before. Why should they not be again? The law against Baptists had long been in existence, with no victim besides those three noble men who had suffered in the summer of 1651. Would it not now be the more greedy after its long fast? They dared not hope that this first step had been taken for naught, that Goodman Gold was arrested only to be set free again with no punishment. They had seen, alas! what the magistrates could do against the enemies of their faith, and they could not expect that the dreadful heresy of the Anabaptists would receive more favor than had been shown to that of others.

John had been much agitated by the event that had occurred, fearing only its effects upon his sister, whose delicate and sensitive organization, he knew, was little able to bear so rude a shock. But he was surprised beyond measure to see her calm and composed as she would have been had an old friend called upon the family, and to hear her speak with a firm voice upon the sufferings that they might yet have to endure.

For a long time nothing could be thought of save the sorrow that would be brought into the little family dwelling upon the island, and it was resolved that Goodman Lowe and his wife should visit them early in the morning and allay their fears as much as possible; though they felt that it would be almost a hopeless task. However, it was only a Christian duty they were to perform, and Ruth secretly determined to go with them.

It was quite late when the little circle separated for their rest, and Ruth, retiring to her room, closed the shutters at once, and opened her Bible to end the day in her accustomed manner. She had read a few words when there was again a knock at the outer door; this time a low, timid knock, yet loud enough for her to hear it, as her room was directly overhead. She started involuntarily to her feet and advanced to the window, at the same time so shading the light that she could look out into the darkness of the night. For a few moments she could see nothing, but soon her eyes became accustomed to the feeble light of the stars, and she could just discern the forms of two persons, apparently women, waiting silently in the shadow of the doorway. At this instant the screen fell away from her candle and the rays of light streamed through the window out into the street. One of the persons at the door stepped quickly out from beneath the building and looked up at the window, and Ruth had no difficulty in recognizing the features of the old family servant, Prudence. A minute more and the door was opened, and Ruth held in her close embrace once more her "little Grace."

After the first warm greeting, Ruth drew both of them away to her room and closed the door. Apparently, no other person in the house had heard their knock or knew of their presence, and when Ruth would have called John, Grace stopped her hurriedly and begged her to disturb no one, not even her brother, for she felt that she must be alone with her, to make known without reserve the purpose of her visit.

Ruth was, of course, much surprised that her sister should come to her, and most of all at so late an hour of the night. Both Prudence and Grace wore cloaks that nearly enveloped the whole form, and their close hoods shielded their faces from the gaze of any one whom they might chance to meet. This was necessary, for Grace did not wish it known, even by those at home, that she had considered any duty of greater obligation than obedience to her father's command.

The two sisters sat down together upon a low seat, a sort of bench that extended along one side of the room, and Grace began at once, and as she spoke her blue eyes glistened and her cheeks flushed with eagerness. Ruth did not interrupt her until she paused a little and looked up with tearful eyes into her face. Without heeding the presence of Prudence, on whom she knew she could rely for sympathy, Grace began her story.

"You know that I have always tried to be good, Ruth," she said—and the perfect simplicity of her manner touched her sister's heart—"but how little I have succeeded you cannot know, for my outward actions have often been very different from what the desires of my heart would have prompted. It is easy to deceive people and make them think you are good, but you cannot deceive yourself and God. And oh, Ruth, you can never know how I have suffered during the past week. I do not know why I have been so distressed; I cannot think of anything that has turned my thoughts more than ever before upon myself; but I only know that it has been so, and that I can find no relief from my pain; for it is pain, more piercing and terrible than any bodily suffering could be. I have talked with mother, and she has helped me somewhat; but oh, Ruth, nothing will take away this aching in my heart, this yearning for something that I do not possess. Mother says it is a feeling that almost every one has at some time in life, and that it will pass off after a little while; that I should not worry over my sins, for Christ died to save me, and I am baptized in his name; that I am one of God's children and that he will lead me in the way he wishes me to go. But all this does not satisfy me. The feeling still remains that I need something more to make me what I so desire to be, and to give me peace of mind. I am sinful and I am sorry for my sin. But what to do I know not. Dear Ruth"—and she put her arm around her sister's neck—"you can help me, for I remember how you helped Paul Wallingford. You can surely do for your sister what you did for him. The Bible says that every one must be born again before he can see the kingdom of God. It is this that I want. I know it! I feel it! But how can I be born again? What is this new birth—the birth that alone can give me peace? Where shall I find the answer unless you give it to me, unless you tell me what it is to be born of water and of the Spirit?"

There fell a little silence as the troubled girl, as yet hardly more than a mere child, waited for her sister to reply.

"Dear little Grace," Ruth said, caressing fondly the bright locks resting upon her bosom, "you ask me a question that I cannot answer, for the Scriptures say: 'The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.' I cannot tell you how one may be born again, but I can tell you what the Lord Jesus would have you to do and what it is to be a Christian."

"Oh, tell me that, tell me that!" cried the weeping Grace. "It is all in vain that I try to be good of myself; the same old wicked heart cries out against me, and I cannot deny its reproaches."

"You will never find the power to deny them while you are relying on yourself. The same Christ who said we must be born again has told us what the sinner is to do. You have read often yourself how undone they are in themselves; how he bids them come to him; how he died for sinners; how by his sacrifice all are saved who believe on him. Are you not content to believe on Jesus, to trust his promise that your sins though as scarlet shall be white as wool?"

"Ah, I have tried to think that, but after all that is not being born again."

"You have *tried* to think it, Grace, but you have *not* thought it; you have not believed it; you have not made that great truth a part of your being, of your very soul! '*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved*,' was not spoken in vain. Do this, and the new birth is accomplished, the heart is changed—how or why we may not be able to explain, but we know that it is so. Dear little Grace, this is all I can do for you. I can show you Jesus; the rest must all lie between him and you. He has finished the work, he is able to save; he is ready and holds his hands to you, and bids you come. It is your part to go to him if you would receive the blessing."

Poor Grace was deeply affected. Her slight frame was shaken by the violence of her sobs, and her breath came heavily from her lips. There was a silence in the room, and the younger maiden clung to her sister as if despairing. What more could Ruth do for the dear one at her side? She felt her own inability to help her; she knew, as she had said, that human power could only direct to Christ, and that he must do the rest. Then there came to her mind that blessed saying which had so often proved itself more precious than even her faith had dared to hope: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," And again: "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it."

The two sisters knelt down while the elder prayed. The simple, heartfelt words sank deep into the soul of the distressed girl and bore away to heaven the very anguish of her grief, the bitterness of her longing; and as the Son of God bowed his head to listen to the maidens' prayer, the trembling, fearing little Grace saw the cross of Calvary, and hanging there the Crucified—the Crucified for her—and there was joy in heaven in the presence of the angels of God; and the sweet voice of Grace, after the words of her sister's prayer were ended, no longer trembling from fear and sorrow, but from triumphant joy, gave thanks to the almighty One who had received her for his own, who had at last led her out of darkness into his marvelous light.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE MIDNIGHT ARREST.

THE two sisters sat long together, talking far into the night, for there was much to be said by each relative to their past and future course, and there were many words of hope and encouragement, of warning and exhortation, that came to the lips of each of the loving girls, for each feared for the other and thought with trembling heart on all the dangers that they saw so near at hand.

Ruth felt obliged to tell Grace of the alarming event that had occurred that evening, for she felt sure that John and herself would not escape the notice of the authorities now that they were aroused once more to the execution of the law that had so long lain dormant.

She knew that the attention of the magistrates would be fastened upon themselves, that their baptism would inevitably bring upon them the strong and cruel grasp of the law.

It was necessary, then, that Grace should know their exact position. Ruth was anxious that she should see that they suffered now because they were following their Lord, and that the importance of following him closely might be impressed vividly upon her mind; she also desired to guard against the eagerness for action which possesses every heart into which has entered the redeeming love of God. Ruth feared lest her young sister might be led by ideas of duty too hastily formed to pursue a course that would bring trial upon her which she would fail under and finally shrink from, if she had not entered upon it with an enlightened mind and with full purpose of heart. She would not see her little Grace put her hand to the work of God and then look back. What she had to say therefore was calculated to reveal to the new disciple not only the pleasures of God's service, but its toils and dangers.

Grace learned with sorrow of this new action on the part of the magistrates; she had not expected that the path which John and Ruth had chosen would be a smooth one, but she had little thought that they might be called to suffer so soon the terrible fate of those whom she had seen persecuted so bitterly and unrelentingly.

This conversation opened the way for Grace to ask a question that her sister's course had naturally suggested to her mind. She was now a child of God—she felt it, she knew it—and it was an assurance she had never had before, this blessed consciousness that Christ loved her and had received her into his fold. Now could it be that by her baptism in infancy she had been made a member of the church of God? Could it be that by a ceremony performed during her years of unconsciousness her own independent and responsible position before God had been taken from her? Was she thus freed from personal obligation to obey the Lord's command?

In answer to her question, Ruth endeavored to set before her the truth as she believed it.

She took the sacred word, the great argument, the never-failing reliance of that people of God whose cause she had espoused, and from its pages of living light she expounded to her eager listener the teachings of the Lord Christ. She showed Grace the meaning of the ordinance; she explained fully the way of its performance; she indicated to her all its symbolic beauty.

It was past midnight when the younger maiden rose at last to take her departure Silently, too, and with face pale with anxiety and brow furrowed by thought, the old servant arose from the seat which she had occupied in the farthest corner of the apartment. The sisters had not seen her fixed attention as they conversed together; they had not marked her deep emotion as they arose from their united prayer, joined together by the love of God; they had not noted the tears that had filled her eyes as the earnest and tender words of Ruth impressed upon the heart of little Grace the truths of the Scriptures; and now that she prepared in silence for her walk, they thought her moody brow and pale cheeks were only the signs of unwonted weariness.

Ah, could they have looked into the heart of the aged woman, could they have seen its depths stirred as they had never been before, and could they have known that the words spoken that night had been blessed not only to her to whom they had been addressed, but also to the soul of the humble serving-woman, they would have given the great God thanks that he could turn weakness into strength and cause the little seed sown with not a thought of the harvest to bring forth abundant fruit.

With hushed footsteps the three passed through the hall and down the dark staircase to the door. A few parting and whispered words of caution and encouragement were interchanged, and Prudence and Grace were about to step out into the street when Ruth hastily motioned them back and with a startled, impulsive motion closed the door again. Instantly upon the opposite wall of the long hall there flickered a bright red glare, diamond shaped and double, as if two brilliant, self-luminous gems were set in the oaken boards. At the same instant voices in the street were heard, and they turned to look from the little openings in the door through which streamed the gleaming rays. They had but an instant to wait. Five men passed by at a rapid pace, two of them bearing torches, two of them armed, and one walking in the midst, his head bowed upon his breast and his hands fettered.

It was only a few seconds that they were in sight, but it was long enough for Ruth to recognize by the fitful glare the face of the prisoner. A cold shudder passed through her frame as she saw Thomas Gold, their visitor in the early evening, who had been sought beneath that very roof by the officers of the law, passing on his way to the prison.

When the sound of the footsteps on the hard-trodden earth had died away, Ruth turned again and looked upon the pale face of little Grace. Was any word from her lips needed to enforce the lesson taught by the melancholy spectacle? She saw in the meditative blue eyes, in the quivering lip, in the blanched cheek, that her sister, hardly more than child as she was, understood all, and without speaking, with only one more hurried but fervent embrace, she opened the door and they passed out into the night.

The gray streaks of dawn came up in the eastern sky and kissed the brow of the sleeping Ruth; and as the bright red beams of the rising sun shone in at the window and cast their glow upon the closed curtains of her eyes, she saw again in her dreams the bright reflection on the wall, the passing torches, the wearied, hurrying men, and in the midst the fettered hands, the bowed head, the faltering steps of Goodman Gold. And then, what more! At the prison door no longer stood the prisoner she had seen. Now it was a woman—a woman thrust into the narrow cell; a woman kneeling on the bare floor, with hands upraised to heaven; a woman weeping in solitude, awaiting her condemnation. As if with another's eyes she saw herself!

CHAPTER XXII.

BAPTISM OF JOHN AND RUTH.

THE morning of the following Lord's Day dawned clear and beautiful, the cool October air becoming warmer as the day advanced, the landscape wrapped in the mellow light of the glorious Indian summer. To-day John Hathorne and Ruth were to unite themselves with the body of Baptists in Charlestown.

At an early hour they proceeded with Goodman Lowe's family to the water's edge and took boat for the opposite shore. There was no word spoken by any of the little party as they crossed over. All were intent upon their own reflections, and there was needed no utterance to signify that there dwelt in each breast sympathetic thoughts. Ruth sat in the stern of the boat, and leaning over the gunwale, played absently with the sparkling wavelets that danced gleefully about her little hand. It was a tender, solemn joy that filled her heart as she thought of the beautiful river that sparkled beneath the rays of the same sun more than sixteen hundred years before, and of the holy One who went down into its liquid wave, symbolizing the death he should die. She seemed to see the flowing stream, the green and wooded banks, the assembled multitudes, the preacher clothed with the raiment of camel's hair, and him, the Son of God. And as she gazed upon his face, as she saw the glance of the eyes so full of love for all mankind resting upon her, as she heard his sacred words, "Suffer it to be so now," and witnessed his lowly submission to the hand of man, she turned her grateful gaze to heaven and gave God praise for his greatest blessing to the world.

The keel of the boat grated upon the sands, and they proceeded to disembark. The meeting was to be held in the open air, as were most of the meetings, unless the state of the weather prohibited, and a beautiful spot it was which they used for their temple—a gentle slope rising from the very brink of the water, dotted here and there with trees and rocks, and spread with a soft carpet of green turf. A large boulder near the shore formed a sort of natural pulpit from which the preacher declared the truths of God to the congregation on the rising slope.

Goodman Lowe's family were the first to arrive upon the ground, for they had made an early start for the sake of John and Ruth, who were now preparing for the ordinance in a neighboring dwelling. Gradually the people began to assemble and dispose themselves in little groups over the picturesque hillside. A deep shadow rested upon the faces of the older portion of the congregation. The events of the two preceding days had created a profound feeling of sadness and care in the hearts of all Baptists. Two of their number had been seized by the magistrates and cast into prison, and there were rumors of the intention of the government to proceed farther. In plain view from their place of meeting lay the dwelling of Thomas Gold upon the green shore of Noddle's Island, and they could not look upon that roof, the house into which so much sorrow and misery had been brought, without feeling more than a deep sympathy for the stricken family. They could not tell where the newly-awakened energies of the law would stop; they knew that they themselves were liable to be apprehended at any moment and hurried away without warning from their homes. They were saddened by the prospect.

But when the services were begun, and the solemn hymns arose to heaven, and the voice of the preacher, deep and reverent and calm, was lifted up in thanksgiving and prayer, gradually the faces of the careworn men became bright again as their hearts were cheered by divine consolation. Then when the sermon followed, from the text skillfully chosen to meet the peculiar wants of the day, there was no longer any shade of sorrow left on heart or brow, but the light of joyful triumph kindled in every eye. The words were as if spoken anew by the Lord, as they had been proclaimed of old to Joshua: "Be strong and of a good courage; for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land which I sware unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest." It was a noble foundation for a noble sermon, and the troubles of the little band of disciples vanished away like mist before the rising sun, as the power of the Spirit pressed home to every heart the words of divine encouragement; and when the closing words fell from the lips of the preacher, the hymn that followed bore on its jubilant wings a heartfelt offering of triumphant praise to the Father of all.

Then came the still, calm hour of baptism. There was a short prayer. In this solemn hour why did the voice that spoke with God cause an involuntary start on the part of both John and Ruth? Ah! it was an additional joy for them to know that he who had suffered with them and helped them to a knowledge of the truth was present now to witness their dedication to Christ. It was a surprise and a happiness to hear the voice of Paul Wallingford taking a part in the solemn services.

Then as the assembled throng upon the shore sang sweetly of Christ's love, Ruth passed from their midst and went down into the water with the servant of God. The voices of the singers were hushed, and the solemn words came back from the waves to the listening disciples:

"'Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. Who is he that overcometh the world but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.'"

And then was asked the solemn question, the answer to which fell clearly and distinctly from the lips of the maiden: "'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.'"

And as she came up out of the water, Ruth was conscious that God's approving Spirit was resting upon her, for at last the command was fulfilled, and the peace of a satisfied soul dwelt within her breast.

Then John Hathorne followed his Master's footsteps into the watery grave; but it seemed to those who saw it that his advance to the fulfillment of the command was more like that of a conqueror than of one who was to symbolize death. His eyes were fixed upon the sunny sky as if he saw above him the crown that should recompense every cross, and his face beamed with conscious joy as his voice, firm and triumphant, proclaimed his faith in the Redeemer.

Was there yet anything lacking to complete their joy? A flush of crimson mantled the cheek of Ruth as her quick eye caught sight of two figures hurrying away among the dispersing congregation. She had received more than she had even dared to hope. She knew not how it could be, but she could not have been mistaken in the form of little Grace. No! surely her sister and the old servant had been present and witnessed her baptism, and it was with a heart full of joy and thanksgiving that she prayed God to give them both a knowledge of the truth.

An hour afterward, when the boat that had carried Goodman Lowe's family to their home again put off from the Charlestown shore with John and Ruth, an Indian canoe darted noiselessly out into its wake and drew rapidly near. With a skillful turn of the paddle, Solomon dashed alongside of the boat, and Paul leaped lightly over the gunwale from the canoe.

Once more the hands of the friends were clasped; a murmured "Thank God!" from each unlocked the treasures of their hearts, and as the boat went on its way the three lifted up their voices in a song of praise to the Giver of all good things.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

JOHN AND RUTH CAST INTO PRISON.

UPON the Monday evening after their baptism, John and Ruth were sitting together upon the stoop that was built out upon one side of the house, and which commanded a view of the waters of the bay. Paul had arrived a few minutes before, and was now standing at a little distance with Goodman Lowe, with whom he was talking earnestly of his unsuccessful attempt, made that day, to gain admission to the two unfortunate men who had been imprisoned. Ruth was speaking to John, with a sister's fondness, of little Grace, longing to have another opportunity of conversing with her and of pointing out to her the necessity of studying for herself the divine word, that she might not blindly follow another's guidance, but proceed in accordance with her own enlightened convictions of the truth.

They had been thus conversing for some time when, just as they were rising to enter the house for shelter from the heavy and chilly dew of night, a dark form glided swiftly around the corner of the dwelling and stood silently before them. They were not a little startled at first, but in an instant they recognized the form and features of the faithful Indian, Long Solomon. Paul knew at once that there must be something of importance to bring the Indian to them in such haste, and he immediately asked him whom he wished to see.

"All—every one—somebody!" he answered in a hoarse and hurried whisper. "Me see good father, Eliot, at Muddy Brook, and Solomon hear white chiefs talk with him about Baptists. Say that must be have mercy no longer, but punish, put in prison, whip more men and send them away to Plantation. Solomon creep very near like a snake, and hear when they speak low and look round frightened. Solomon hear governor whisper about John Hathorne and ask question if little mother be made prisoner too or send away."

"And when did all this occur?" asked Paul, his voice trembling with emotion.

"To-day. Eliot done teaching Indians, and Solomon creeped round behind and hear all."

"Did you learn anything further? Did they make any plans as to the time or place of arrest?"

"Me hear them say that must be quick; that every day Baptists get strong, and must make sample of Hathorne, for 'cause he great man and be seen by somebody. Solomon tink there be no stop from coming quick. Run, hurry with Solomon! His canoe all ready, and he get horses at Muddy Brook!"

"No, Solomon," Paul answered, shaking his head slowly, "not so fast. We will consult first and see what it is best to do, and then if we need you, you shall know it. Meanwhile, hold yourself ready for a journey to Providence at an hour's notice. You have done us a great service already. Be watchful, and if you see any further movements against us, let us know at once."

So saying, Paul turned away and entered the house, whither John and Ruth had already gone, the former almost forcing the maiden to go with him, as she would have stayed to hear more and to acknowledge to the faithful Indian the great service he had done them.

Solomon sped away into the darkness, and made his way rapidly through the streets of the town to the vicinity of the prison, where he found everything perfectly quiet. Taking up his post, however, beneath a large beech tree that stood at some distance, but in full view of the door of the building, he remained erect in its shadow, as motionless as the trunk itself. Still as marble and apparently as lifeless he stood, his keen eye only moving occasionally from the building before him to the stars in the clear, cold sky.

Meanwhile, in the family-room of the dwelling of Goodman Lowe there were earnest, suppressed voices engaged in consultation as to what should be done. John and Ruth were both undecided as to the course they ought to pursue. As for Paul, he was determined. No doubt rested in his mind, and he eagerly urged them to make their escape while there was yet time. They need only go to some retreat in the forest, to dwell there for a few days or weeks, perhaps, until the first violence of the storm should have passed away, when they could return to their home and friends, and continue to labor with the little band that needed so much every strong heart and hand. It was their duty to save themselves for future usefulness, and not to deliver themselves at once to the walls of the prison, from which they might not come forth for long and weary months, or, if then, only to perpetual banishment from the colony.

But for a long time the arguments of Paul were unavailing, for they were unwilling to seem to run from danger or trial, and the opinion of their host was that they should await patiently whatever should come upon them. Thomas Gold and Thomas Osborne had not shunned the trial which they had seen approaching for a long time, believing that it was God's will to make them instruments of good in his hands.

All agreed, however, in the opinion that there would be no movement of the authorities until the next day, and therefore Paul was well content with their promise that they would think of his advice, and if they could reconcile it with their ideas of duty, would leave the town before dawn and betake themselves to the refuge that Solomon should provide for them. With this understanding, Paul bade them farewell, saying that he should call at an early hour in the morning.

But even as he was leaving the room a slight noise was heard at the outer door; instantly it was opencd from without, and the Indian glided swiftly into the hall. Paul's heart sank within him, for he knew that Solomon's sudden reappearance could be owing only to one cause. He motioned him to speak quickly. The Indian needed no urging. He had seen a sudden stir in the building which he had been watching immediately following the arrival of a messenger. Creeping then beneath the window of the guard-room, the only lighted window of the lower story of the building, with his keen ear ready for the slightest sound, he had heard that the messenger had brought an order from the governor for the immediate arrest of the persons of John Hathorne and Ruth Hathorne, and the retention of the same until the pleasure of the court should be made known.

The Indian urged them eagerly away. His canoe lay drawn up among the bushes that crowned a little beach at a short distance from the house. Once there and afloat, they would be perfectly safe. One minute's hesitation, and all might be lost.

But that one minute's delay occurred and decided the case for them. The hurried approach of feet was heard, and Paul had only time to thrust the Indian into an adjoining room, with true foresight knowing that there was no longer any hope for the immediate escape of his friends and that any future attempt must be made with the aid of Solomon, when the feet stopped at the door, voices were heard in hasty consultation, and the authoritative knock of the leader of the party demanded admission.

There was an instant's hesitation on the part of the little assembly. Then John himself stepped quickly to the door and opened it. There was no delay or hesitation on the part of the officers. The warrant was produced and read, and the object of their visit thus formally made known. John listened calmly to the reading, and turning with a smile to Paul, he said: "Indeed, the poor Baptists are honored, to have so much attention shown them by the government."

The blow had fallen at last, and now that there was no longer any suspense there came a deep feeling of relief to all. Paul and John had greatly feared the effects so rude a shock might have upon Ruth's extremely sensitive nature. But she only turned quietly to one of the daughters of Goodman Lowe, and requested her to bring her cloak and hood from her room.

It was all over. Goodman Lowe had remonstrated earnestly against the severity that would take a tender maiden from her home in the darkness of the night and commit her to all the discomforts of a cheerless prison. But all had been in vain, and they were gone—gone to what fate no one of them could tell. Paul Wallingford, seated in sorrowful silence before the table, his head resting heavily upon his hands, neither looked up nor moved when Goodman Lowe spoke of the morrow and of the efforts he would make for the liberation of the prisoners. He had no interest in his words, for he knew how fruitless would be the task of turning the will of those in power.

At last the sad stillness that had fallen on the little family circle after the few vain words of cheer from its head was broken. The solemn voice of the Goodman was heard. "Let us pray!" he said; and they all kneeled down and lifted up their hearts in prayer to the great Father, that he might watch over and protect their lost ones, and bless this affliction to all with whom it had to do. Thus their hearts were comforted and their fears relieved.

CHAPTER XXIV.

LITTLE GRACE'S RESOLUTION.

THE brother and sister were led away to their prison. The building was a small structure situated in what is now Court street—a dismal, gloomy house with small windows and steep roof. The second floor was only one large room, into which prisoners of both sexes were often crowded, particularly when religious persecution brought to the doors of the jail more unfortunates than it could well accommodate. The attic was divided into several very small apartments, each with a gable window looking out over the town.

John and Ruth were fortunate enough to have one of these upper rooms assigned to each of them, in opposite ends of the building, so that they might not converse together, but where they were only too glad to escape the contact which they dreaded with the mixed assemblage in the room below. It was late when they were thrust into these rooms, and they were left in darkness until the morning should dawn.

When at last the day appeared, gilding the tops of the houses and the broad surface of the glittering bay, it was only with a feeling of greater sadness that the lonely prisoners looked from the little windows upon the beauties of the outer world. From her window Ruth could plainly see the roof of her father's dwelling, and even the window of the upper room that had always been her own. As she thought of the familiar apartment and of its occupant, her well loved little Grace, and contrasted her own situation with that of her sister, the tears could no longer be kept back, and bowing her weary head upon her hands, she wept and sobbed her lonely grief away.

At last there was a movement in the dwelling that had been her home; nay, even in the room that had been hers; and as she strained her eyes to overcome the distance, the window was thrown open and Grace herself stood before it looking out into the street. The poor, imprisoned maiden gazed with unutterable longing upon the form so dear to her. Suddenly she started up from her seat, and seizing the white coarse towel that was lying on the rude washstand, she reached far out from her window and waved it up and down in the air. One brief minute passed, and she saw that she was observed. Grace started suddenly, waited until Ruth repeated the sign, and then with a single wave of the hand turned quickly away and passed from the room.

Ruth had acted upon impulse, and bitterly did she reproach herself for her thoughtless selfishness as she reflected that her hasty act could bring no good to herself, and could only create sorrow for Grace, for she would be unable to exert herself in behalf of her imprisoned sister, and would at best only have the aggravating power of conversing with her from window to window as they had done that morning. She did not know the quickness of thought, the energy and promptness of action, of which little Grace was capable, and she little dreamed that in a few short hours she should clasp her sister in close embrace and speak with her once more.

Yet it was to be. Grace had no sooner recognized her sister than she determined to go to her—by what means was yet to be discovered—so without delaying at the window longer than to assure Ruth that she had recognized her, she set about her plans immediately. But who could give her the necessary assistance? In her perplexity she appealed to Prudence, and it was speedily arranged between them that the latter should see Mr. Wilson, and relying upon his kindness, should ask from him a pass to enter the prison. The old servant was well known to the minister, and readily gained from him the desired favor; with hurrying feet the two pressed on to the jail, and were admitted without question.

Unexpected as was this great joy, Ruth was little able to command her feelings at first so that they could converse calmly. For a moment it made her sorrow heavier that her little Grace should come to meet her in such a place; but quickly she forgot her situation in the joy she felt at seeing her sister once more and hearing from her own lips of the dear ones at home.

But a more important subject than any personal consideration was pressing itself upon Ruth's attention, for she well knew how Grace's thoughts were tending, and was filled with anxiety for her. It was with emotion, therefore, that she asked her of the opinions that had been forming in her mind since their last interview. There was a little silence before Grace answered, and her beautiful face assumed an expression far more solemn than Ruth had ever seen upon it before. At last she took Ruth's hand that was lying in her lap into her own, and said, thoughtfully:

"Dear Ruth, I must go with you."

A thrill of joy flushed Ruth's cheek with a beautiful rose-tinge. Her hopes were fulfilled, her prayers answered, and she raised her heart in silent thanksgiving to God. But the same old fear came again to her mind—the fear that had haunted her ever since she had last spoken with her sister. She dreaded lest the desire of following her own example, or the thirst for notoriety and for suffering in the sight of others, should have undue influence in bringing about such a decision.

"You are sure," she asked, "that you have chosen the true way?"

"I am sure it is the way that the Bible teaches. I have no doubt that they who follow other courses may be true Christians, but in one respect they are not; they cannot be so Christ-like as are the Baptists. I believe that saying of the Saviour: 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me.' But I also believe that he meant what he said, 'Believe and be baptized,' and I would follow him in his own way as he commanded and as he has revealed it to us."

"But you are sure of your fixedness of purpose? You know all that the step involves? You have thought over and carefully weighed what losses you must suffe and what sorrows you must endure?"

"'That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.' I think I am ready, dear Ruth, if need be, to suffer anything for him. Let it be the trial of fire, and I trust I shall cheerfully pass through it, for the Master will be by my side. That which is loss to me shall be gain for Christ."

There was such calm resolution, such deep earnestness, such simple trust, in the face of the youthful speaker, that Ruth pressed her no more, but was content. So the sisters sat for two happy hours, talking lovingly of their common interests. Then Grace took her leave and passed to the other cell, that she might comfort and cheer her brother's heart, and Ruth was again alone.

CHAPTER XXV.

PLAN FOR ESCAPE.

AS Grace left the prison she met Paul waiting at a little distance, as if expecting her coming. He had learned in some way of her visit to her sister, and had come out for the purpose of meeting her and learning something of Ruth and John. They stood a few moments talking together, and then walked away in the direction of Master Hathorne's dwelling.

Ruth saw their meeting from her window, and—at last she had to confess it—there was a little shrinking of her heart from what she thought would be; but in an instant she was herself again, and she remembered that it was no less the part of love to suffer than to enjoy. Her dark eyes filled with tears, but they were tears more of gladness than of pain, for Paul and little Grace would indeed be very happy together; he would strengthen and support her in all the trials she would yet be called upon to endure. And she knew that, even in their own joy, they would not forget her, the lonely prisoner, for as they had turned to walk away, Grace had pointed out to him the window of her cell, and they had both waved their hands to her for a silent good-bye.

It was very oppressive, the solitude of her cell, after Grace and Prudence had gone. The silence became almost unbearable, and she walked the room back and forth from very weariness of quiet. At last there came the sound of feet ascending the stairs, and she knew that the jailer's wife was bringing her the meagre noon repast. A sudden thought came into her mind; she would be no longer so lonely; she felt that she must have some means of occupying her attention and of taking it away from her sad solitude. She resolved if possible to obtain the requisite materials, and pass the slow-going hours in writing a diary, as she had done while at Providence.

Much to her surprise, she found her request for writing materials readily granted, and when the evening meal was brought to her, the jailer's wife bore also in a neat package abundant means to carry out her purpose.

The next morning dawned bright and clear, and the sunshine streamed in at the little window and fell directly upon the face of the sleeping maiden. She awoke with a smile on her lips, for she had been dreaming that she was free again, walking in the little garden at home, when suddenly the bright sunlight around her had grown more intense and dazzling and a strange joy had taken possession of her breast, because all the world had suddenly become so much more glorious than ever before. She sprang quickly from her couch, clothed herself, and sat down at the open window with her Bible in her hand. The fresh morning air blew in from the sea with its salt fragrance, the birds were singing blithely, and the trees rustled in the breeze and shook from their boughs great showers of richly-colored leaves upon the dewy earth. Ruth felt that there was but one thing wanting to make her dream come true. If she could step forth into the world and wander on and on, free and light-hearted as the little birds that wheeled in swift circles before her window, she felt that she should indeed wonder that the earth could be so beautiful.

Then she read of the God that doeth all things well, and as hour after hour passed by she forgot in her reading her solitude, the means she had obtained for whiling the time away, and all but the sacred book, for the blessed words of the Gospel of John were feeding her soul with the manna of eternal life.

She was surprised when the jailer's wife came to her room with her morning meal, which should have been brought to her more than two hours before, and she made no complaint of the negligence that had kept her until so late an hour of the morning without food.

As she ate the plain fare she sat by the window still, and looking out she noticed a peculiar motion in the window of Grace's room. The distance did not allow her to make out, at first, whether it was meant as a sign to her or not, but at last, by straining her eyes and shading them with her hand, she thought she saw enough to justify her in returning the sign. Her white handkerchief fluttered an instant on the breeze, and instantly in the distant window a bright red cloth was hung, as if to dry, in the air.

There was no further movement made, and Ruth was at a loss to know what could be the meaning of the sign. But soon, as all still remained quiet in the opposite window, she ceased to think of it, and taking her writing materials, began her labor.

Night has again drawn its dark curtains over the face of nature, and Ruth lies sleeping sweetly upon the little couch of her cell. Upon the table by the window lie the carefully folded sheets of her journal, the ink and pen, and her precious, only book. Let us take our happy privilege, and see what the maiden has written that we may know the events of the most eventful afternoon and evening of her imprisonment.

"Again I begin to write my diary, but under very different circumstances from those in which I last wrote. Then there was no bird happier than I, and surely there was no bird more free to wing its way, careless and light-hearted, through the air, than was I to tread the beautiful earth and enjoy to the full all the bounteous gifts of God. But now I write only because of the loss of everything else that can make life happy! Ah, Father, forgive me! I have sinned in saying that; for though all things of this world be taken from me, though it were even worse for me than it is, though I were separated for ever from all that is dear, though I were forgotten by friends and loved ones and were wholly without human pity or love, yet everything would not be lost. The love of him who has redeemed me with his blood is ever, will ever be, mine. Surely I will never doubt him, for I know that my Redeemer loveth me.

"As I remember this my little cell is no longer sad and lonely. Its bare walls become fair and bright, and extend their narrow bounds till they are as wide as heaven itself. I feel no longer that I am a prisoner, for where Christ is there can only be happiness. No, I am not alone. I am not unhappy. In my thoughts, my desires, my hopes, my prayers, I am not a prisoner, but with my blessed Lord I am in spirit free.

"A long interval has occurred since I penned those last words, and now again I sit down to write the cause of my interruption. It is evening, and I can see to write only with difficulty by the miserable light they have allowed me, but I am anxious to make a record before I sleep of every little incident that has occurred, that I may not suffer any one of them all to escape my memory. I shall prize it by and by.

"I had been sitting for perhaps half an hour, meditating upon subjects naturally suggested by what I had written, when suddenly my attention was attracted by something striking against my window, and an instant afterward a little ball of paper tied with a red string fell at my feet. My first impulse was to look from the window to see who could have thrown it, when I observed the faithful Indian, Solomon, walking leisurely away at some little distance. I then unrolled the paper and read as follows:

"'DEAR RUTH: Paul and Solomon and myself have made all necessary arrangements for your escape. I tell you plainly I did not speak of the subject when with you for two reasons: first, I was unwilling to abuse the confidence of Mr. Wilson, through whose means I came; and then I feared you would try to urge me, for some reason or other, to give up the whole plan. But now that all is arranged you will consent. To-night at midnight you will be ready. Paul and Solomon will meet beneath the prison walls with ropes. The Indian will scale the roof by the aid of the high wall that joins the house at the other side, and so will aid you. Your place of refuge will be where you have seen the sign, the cloth of the same color as the string. Do not delay for John; he will follow you.

"'Your sister, GRACE.'

"I was greatly surprised at this letter from little Grace, and, more than this, my heart was full of gratitude to her and Paul for thinking of me and planning for my happiness; but at the same time I was sorry they had made the attempt, for I thought it better for many reasons to wait patiently for our release until those who had brought us within these walls should see fit to restore us to freedom. I thought long over the note, and reread it many times. At last I found a few words on the other side of the paper that I had not noticed before. They said that Paul would pass beneath my window at dusk and receive any word I might write to them; for Grace knew I could get the materials for writing, as she had left money with the jailer's wife to supply the means of granting any request John or I might make.

"Not only, then, was the plan for our escape made by our little Grace, but the dear, thoughtful girl had foreseen that the hours of our prison-life would pass drearily enough without occupation. I little knew the courageous worth of our sister. She will make a noble woman.

"It yet lacked full three hours to the time when Paul would expect some word from me in answer to the proposition to escape. What should my answer be? I could not tell, for surely it was a hard question for me to decide without counsel; there would be many chances of failure, even if I could think it right to make the attempt; and, more than this, the place of concealment which Grace had indicated was in my father's own house; from that very fact, of course, secure from suspicion, yet not to be thought of for a moment, for it was the place, the one place of all the world, from which I was debarred by my father's solemn command.

"While I was yet absorbed in thought I heard the approach of some person in the passage outside of my room, and immediately the jailer himself stopped at my door and requested me to go with him. He said that John wished to see me, and that he had given him permission to talk with me in his own cell on condition that the jailer's wife should remain with us during the interview. I knew well that John wished to speak with me about this subject, but I feared from this precaution of the jailer that he would be unable to do so. However, I was only too glad to see dear John again, and I followed with joy to his little room.

"I was much affected by the change that has come upon John since I last saw him. It is true it is not a long time that we have been here, but he looks as if it had been a year. Pale and haggard, he stood by the door to receive me, and as I fell weeping into his arms, he spoke to me with a voice weak and trembling, as if it were that of a sick man. But the time allotted us was short and our words had to be quickly spoken. He said he had not been well; that he had been deeply anxious for me not only on account of my imprisonment, but because of the punishment he feared might be laid upon us.

"He spoke rapidly of his fears for my health and of the firm courage I should need to meet the events of the future, and kneeling down, we prayed together for the Master's blessing.

"When we arose he seemed more cheerful, and talked of the monotony of our prison-life and of the means he used to pass the time as profitably as possible. As he spoke he showed me a great number of pages he had written over with whole chapters from the Bible, that he might the more readily fix them in his memory. Just before we separated, he took his pen in hand mechanically, and with an air of abstraction wrote upon a blank page the word '*No*' repeatedly. Then placing it so that I could easily see it, he spoke again of the discomforts of a prison, but urged me not to repine, but to await with all patience the slow approach of our trial. He hoped, he said, for our acquittal; he hoped the magistrates would have become tired of persecutions; but whatever might come he urged me to wait, to be still and listen for God's voice to lead me, to draw not back from the path on which we had entered, nor refuse to suffer what the Lord should require of us for his glory. And so I went back to my cell with my doubt driven away and with the wished-for answer given me.

"When I was again alone I immediately wrote a few words to Grace and Paul, praying them not to think me ungrateful, but expressing my determination to abide the event of our trial, as John, I knew, would also answer them. Then I sat at the window with my Bible until Paul approached. He took my note from the ground without being seen by any one, and immediately went away.

"Perhaps an hour had passed, and it had already become quite dark when the noise of a pebble upon the window pane attracted my notice. The window was closed on account of the chilly air of the evening. I instantly opened it, for I knew this to be a signal to attract my attention. I could see no one in the darkness, but soon another little ball of paper fell upon the floor of the room and I eagerly unfolded it. There were but few words:

"'Perhaps it is as well. I have just discovered that the trial will take place to-morrow. God help us all!'

"There was no signature, but I knew it came from Paul. I stood by the window and looked out, that he might know, if he was still there, that I thanked him for his thoughtful care.

"Now that the decision is made I am glad that the matter is thus settled. I am glad that the plan for our escape is not to be carried out, but that we are to show to the world that we are not afraid to abide the consequences of following what we believe to be the directions of our Lord.

"To-morrow, then, we shall be taken before the magistrates to be tried, and of course condemned and punished for being Baptists. I say *of course*, for I can hardly think that John really hopes for our acquittal, though he tried to make me think so, that I might have the less fear. I see no grounds for any such hope, for we can hardly expect Governor Bellingham to show any more mercy to heretics than was granted them by his predecessor."

We have read what the maiden wrote before she lay down to sleep. Truly, she had reason enough for fear, reason enough why her slumber should be disturbed and restless. But the hours of the night passed away and she neither woke nor stirred; her dark hair fell in rich, wavy masses over the coarse linen of the bed; her head rested upon her white, delicately-rounded arm, and her lips wore a half-sad smile, as if in her dreams she saw visions far different from those that the light of the morning might reveal to her.

"He giveth his beloved sleep."

CHAPTER XXVI.

CAST OUT FROM HOME.

THE magistrates were merciful. John and Ruth were condemned, found guilty of the heresy of the Baptists, and banished from the colony upon pain of death. Only banished! Not whipped! not mutilated! not even remanded to prison to languish within its narrow walls! Only banished! Twelve hours longer they were allowed for their preparations; then, if they were still within the limits of the town, they would forfeit the mild indulgence of the magistrates and be again seized. Forty-eight hours, and they must be beyond the boundaries of the colony.

As the brother and sister came down together from the prisoner's stand, Paul Wallingford and Grace pressed forward through the crowd and met them. A silent pressure of the hand, an earnest glance full of sympathy and gratitude, were all the friends allowed themselves as an expression of their emotion. They passed out into the street and hurried away to the house that had been their home, to Master Hathorne's dwelling.

John and Ruth wondered that they should be led in this direction, but Grace bade them wait until they arrived, when all would be explained to them. So they went on their way through the familiar streets, past the houses of their friends, noting carefully and sorrowfully all things, for this was the last time they would behold them. At length they came to the little garden; then to the paved courtyard before the house; and there at the open door stood their mother, as she had stood once before to receive them, alone but with outstretched arms.

For a little while they all sat together in the family-room, and then it was that John and Ruth learned of their father. He was ill; in his room above he was stretched upon the bed of pain. They did not tell them that it was chiefly his great sorrow, shame, and anger that had brought his illness upon him, but they only said that while he firmly refused to see them before their departure, he had consented to their return for the few brief hours of their stay in the town. He felt that he had done his duty in banishing his unbelieving children from his roof, but he would not now inflict such pain upon their mother and the others to whom they were so dear by refusing them an interview before their final departure. He would not see them, but others could satisfy their own consciences in the matter.

And so they were all united once more, but, alas! for the last time. But there was too much to be done to allow of any great delay, and quickly the reunited friends arose to make the necessary preparations for the journey to Providence; for it was determined that thither the banished brother and sister should direct their steps.

Grace and her mother left the room together to seek Prudence and make needful arrangements. John went away to the room that had been his own in happier days; and Ruth—Paul Wallingford's hand was laid gently upon her arm, as she was turning away, and she remained with him.

Sorrowful indeed was the parting when at last the hour came in which the little party turned their faces for ever away from the loved home. Assembled in the great hall, with the household domestics standing around, their faces sad and their eyes filled with tears, the divided family stood. Somewhat busier perhaps than the occasion demanded, John was engaged in buckling and arranging carefully the strap of his sword belt, while Ruth hung weeping upon her mother's neck, her quick, low sobs thrilling to the heart of every one who heard. Little Grace held one of her sister's hands in her close clasp, as if she could not let her go, and Willie was clinging close upon the other side, nestling his soft cheek and curly head in the warm folds of her traveling-dress. It was indeed a hard thing that the peace of their home should be for ever destroyed. It was sad enough that hearts so dear to each other should be parted without pity by the decree of mistaken zeal. But it would have been far sadder had those hearts remained united at the expense of the truth which it was their duty to cherish. And now, although such sorrow, deep and full, was welling up in the hearts of those who were to depart, they both rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for his name who had called them to know himself and to walk in the way of his own commandments.

At last the final words had all been spoken, the farewell kisses given, and the exiled ones went on their way. Ah, how different the departure now from that only a few months before! Their faces were turned toward the same place, but there was weeping now; there was joy then. There was heart rending now; there was sweet hope then. Then it was the fair spring-time, but now the brown leaves of autumn were falling in melancholy showers to the earth. As the clatter of the horses' hoofs died away in the distance there fell upon the dwelling a dreary chill, as if the shining sun had hid his face in anger at the deeds of men.

Ruth and John passed on quickly through the town and out of its narrow bounds into the free and open country; and as they crossed the neck of land that joins the peninsula with the main land, they breathed more freely and felt as if the shackles of bigotry and fanaticism were shaken off for ever. It was with thankful hearts that they pressed on toward their destination, for they thought of what might have been their fate had not God in his mercy tempered the anger of their judges —with thankful hearts, but with hearts how heavy and sad can only be known by those who are driven guiltless from their home and all that they hold dear.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE PURITAN'S DEATHBED.

THE dwelling of Ezekiel Hathorne was hushed and still, for its owner lay upon his dying bed. He had not left his room since the departure of his children, and four long weeks had passed since that day, and with each hour he had grown more ill. For two weeks he had not left his bed, but had been slowly, almost imperceptibly, growing feebler and paler and more wasted as the time went by. It was strange, this last illness; no one could tell exactly what its nature was. He had taken cold at first, and had been seized with fever accompanied by great pain in the head and chest; but the flush upon his cheek had paled away, the pain had left him after a little while, and he had no acute bodily suffering; still, he did not become better, but only worse. He lay quietly, uncomplaining, and rarely speaking, but growing weaker with every passing breath and seeming to care less and less about the things going on around him.

His wife and little Grace were unwearied in their care for him. One of them was constantly in the sick room, and often both were at his side. But he seldom noticed them or asked for anything at their hands, and they were always unsuccessful when they tried to draw his thoughts away from himself and the subjects with which they knew his mind was occupied. For both Grace and her mother were well aware that his illness was not so much of the body as of the mind, and that continued sorrow of heart was wearing him slowly away.

Grace had never told him that she also had accepted the Baptist faith as her own. She would not bring further suffering upon her father and hasten his steps to the grave. Enough pain had already been inflicted upon his heart by the action of his two eldest children. Grace, however, had talked with her mother, and told her frankly all that had been going on in her own mind, the history of her inner life for the last few weeks. The good woman's heart had been greatly troubled by the tidings, for she would gladly have had one of her children keep to the old faith, yet she had concealed as far as possible her feelings from Grace, that no further shadow might be cast upon the closing life of her husband from the sad faces of those about him.

But could they have known all that was passing in the mind of the sick man during those long, still hours, they would not have feared so much to bring to his knowledge his youngest daughter's conversion to the faith that he had so bitterly opposed. For in the quiet of his room he had thought of nothing but the one great subject—the heresy of his children; and though he looked no more leniently, as the time went by, upon that heresy itself, yet he began to doubt the rectitude of his own action in regard to those who had espoused its cause.

It had been a great shock to his already troubled mind when it was announced to him that his children had been imprisoned. It was while he was ill, confined to his bed with the painful fever fire in all his veins, that he learned of his children's arrest; then came the tidings of the trial and the sentence that would probably be passed. He only answered "Yes" when little Grace begged him for her mother's sake to allow them to come home once more, before they went away for ever; but he said no more, and they were content and brought them home.

But how was it with the father while his children were beneath his roof once more and for the last time, yet he would not allow himself to see them? For the first time during his sickness he was alone, and there was no longer any need of remembering that others' eyes were upon him; his pride was all put away, and he bowed his face upon his hands and groaned aloud. The voices, ah! so well known and so well loved—voices he had not heard for many a weary day—came to his ear faint and indistinct through the closed door.

His heart beat heavily, his conscience smote him, his purpose faltered, and he longed to cry out and call the dear, lost ones to his side, to ask their love, their forgiveness; but he stifled down his voice as the words were even rising to his lips, and burying his face in his hands, he wept like a little child. So the hour passed, until they had gone, and the golden opportunity had been thrown away.

He was much weaker that night than they had yet seen him, and from that time he grew rapidly worse. Never did he speak of John or Ruth, and he never showed in any way that he thought of them. But his wife and little Grace knew.

At length the time has come to which the anxious hours have been hurrying him along while he has lain so passively on his bed. As the red sun near his setting often sends across the softened landscape a sudden gleam of splendor, brighter than any of the glories of summer afternoon, so now the failing powers of the sick man grew strong before their final extinction, and his soul in its near approach to its God cast back upon the earth and into the hearts of those who surrounded the deathbed a gleam of brighter hope and of fairer beauty than had ever emanated from it before.

He had lain all the morning in a sort of stupor, taking no heed of anything about him. Mr. Wilson and others had been to see him, but he had recognized no one. At last, late in the afternoon, he awoke, gazed hastily about, and asked in a trembling voice for his wife and children. They were at his side in an instant, and he spoke with a strength they little thought he possessed.

"I am going to die," he said, taking his wife's hand. "I must go away, but I will not, I cannot, go without forgiveness. I have confessed my sin to God and he has forgiven me, but you, ah, how can you forget the wrong I have done all my dear ones! God has opened my eyes that I may see. I have been blinded, selfish, ignorant, thoughtless, and cruel. I have not been a good father nor a good husband, but God knows I mourn my sin. Ah, John, my son, Ruth, my darling, I loved you both through all, but I drove you away for ever; I shall never see you again, never hear your dear voices—never in this world. But, thank God! there is a world to come, and our entrance there is through one single door, that is open to all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. I have been the Pharisee. I have thought myself too good for the company of my children. But God will receive even a repentant Pharisee, and I shall see them again when they shall see their Saviour.

"Ah, Grace, I cannot ask them to forgive me the wrong I have done them, but do you tell them that their dying father blessed them; tell them that he no longer thought their course sinful; tell them that they have been better Christians than I, for they have acted as their conscience bade them and I have not; and, dear little Grace, remember that it is I who charge you—I who have been so harsh and cruel—never to depart from that which you think to be right, though all the world would force you in another way. Dear child, love Christ the Master, and it will be well with you, whether you follow your father or your sister. Christ unites us all in him. May he forgive our poor, misguided colony, that would seek to divide from him too many who are really his children!

"And, mother, you forgive me too. You have been wiser than I; you have blessed our children, while I have cursed them. Now I must die. God forgive me and all."

Then he folded his hands together and said, "Let us pray!" and they all kneeled down—the wife, the sobbing children, the domestics, who had crept with noiseless feet into the dark room—and he who stood upon the border of eternity prayed the Father to keep them all in truth and holiness to the end.

His last words were spoken painfully; the breath came slowly from his lips; his eyes opened wide, then closed again; he murmured low, and they bent their ears to his lips to hear; it was only, "Dear John, dear Ruth—for—give!"

Ezekiel Hathorne slept the sleep that knows no waking save at the call of God in the resurrection hour.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE NEW FAMILY HOME AT PROVIDENCE.

A FEW weeks after they laid the old man away beneath the sod, on a bright, fresh morning when all the air sparkled with flashing, crystal moisture, all that was left of Master Hathorne's family went forth from the dear old house that looked so reproachfully after them with its staring window eyes, and turned their steps in the way that John and Ruth had twice trodden before. Mrs. Hathorne, who could not keep back the tears of sorrow at leaving the old home, rode upon a pillion behind a sturdy and athletic man. Little Willie was similarly mounted, trembling much inwardly at the novelty of his situation, but carefully trying to let no trace of his fears be observed by those about him. Grace rode a small, gentle pacer hired for the occasion. All the domestics of the family had been placed in the families of two of the neighbors, except old Prudence, who insisted upon going to Providence with them, and who now rode behind one of the attendants.

So they went forth. Sadly, with few words, they wended their way through the little town and passed beyond its boundaries, turning toward Watertown, where they were to meet Paul Wallingford; for he too was to go with them to his home and theirs. As once before he had lingered full of impatience at the junction of the two roads from Boston and Cambridge, so now he was waiting by the roadside the coming of the little cavalcade, and no sooner did the sharp clatter of the horses' hoofs reach his ear than he galloped forward to meet his fellow-travelers.

Paul had not been idle during his stay in the colony. His work had been so faithfully performed that at last the attention of the magistrates had been drawn to him; and the brethren of the Baptist church, which had been forced to remove its place of meeting from Charlestown to Noddle's Island, begged him to save himself for future usefulness by a timely departure beyond the power of the Government. For a long time he had resisted their appeals, seeing no cause for alarm; but now the ever watchful Solomon had discovered that his arrest was spoken of, and he had at last consented to go. So, with the Indian, faithful and true as ever, as their guide, the united party pursued their journey toward the home of their loved ones, in the land of religious toleration and freedom.

Now our task is nearly done. This book is not a novel; it is an historical narrative, and as such it must be true to its purpose and record the happiness, the peace, the deep joy of the soul, that followed those whose acquaintance we have made through its pages, after the days of trouble, doubt, and trial through which it has already carried them.

There was no delay. The Lord's Day following the arrival of friends at the Plantations was bright and fair, the warm sunshine streaming down through the leafless boughs of trees and cheering all nature into a momentary return to life before the white-robed death of the winter of New England. Once more John and Ruth stood upon the bank of the clear stream where they had first seen the Baptists observe the ordinance of their Lord. Their mother stood beside them with her mild, loving eyes filled with tears of joy; and as the music of a beautiful Psalm arose upon the clear air from a hundred voices, their little Grace was led by Paul Wallingford down into the peaceful wave, and by him was buried in the baptism of Jesus Christ the Lord.

The dwelling of Master Wallingford is no longer cheerless and lonely. A happy party is assembled in the great room on the right side of the hall that has hardly been opened before since the house was built; yet there are no visitors there save the family of Master Roger Williams. But there are many in Master Wallingford's family now, for Ruth and John and Grace and Willie with their mother have all gone to live beneath his roof and make his home happy again for him

For him! Yes, and for all; for the words spoken in that one last hour, when Paul with his hand on Ruth's arm gently kept her by his side until he had told her that he loved Grace, indeed, but not as he loved herself, had at last been crowned by their mutual promises before God, to serve him together throughout life.

Peace had come at last to all. But their peace was that of the followers of Christ—peace with God, peace with man, but stern, unyielding warfare with the evil in the world. But as their days went on, and as the days passed into months and the months flocked round the standards of the years, they found it always true that God giveth his strength to his beloved, sustaining them in every trial and abundantly redeeming the promises of his word by the blessing of his love. So they awaited with hope and faith the joys of their Father's house, where the Elder Brother should receive them to himself.

THE END.

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